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VARIETIES OF 'KURDISHNESS' IN TURKEY:

STATE RHETORIC, LANGUAGE, AND REGIONAL COMPARISON

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Abstract

Kurds are the largest ethnic group in Turkey; they have been at the centre of conflict since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Scattered across Turkey, with their own language, distinct from the official language of the state, and historically subject to the state's homogenisation policies, Kurds present an interesting case for scholars of ethnicity. How does this history affect the way 'Kurdishness' is manifested? While Kurds' relationship with the Turkish state and increasingly their everyday lives been widely studied, the diversity of the Kurdish experience in Turkey is not well understood. Drawing on the literature on boundary theory pioneered by Frederick Barth (1969) and developed by Andreas Wimmer (2013) among others, this thesis explores manifestations of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey. To do this, this thesis is interested in the role that state rhetoric, region and language play.

The research design sought to capture something of the diversity of Kurdish experience across Turkey, specifically in Western Turkey (Istanbul, which has the largest Kurdish population within Turkey, and Ayvalık, a small town with certain Kurdish districts) and Southeast Turkey (multi-ethnic Mardin, Diyarbakır, the 'spiritual capital' for Kurds, and Derik, a small town predominated by Kurds). The research utilised three methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Kurdish respondents, both native- and non-native speakers of Kurdish. Participant observation was also undertaken. This data was collected between January and May 2013, with follow-up research conducted in June 2014. In addition, party documents, speeches and statements by party leaders, and selected laws from the early Republican period (1923-1938) and the AKP period (from 2002 to the present) were analysed.

This research suggests that 'Kurdishness' in Turkey is manifested in different forms. Instead of taking 'Kurdishness' as a matter of degree, this thesis suggests that individuals exhibit 'Kurdishness' in a variety of forms. Context is key. The thesis first examines the role of state rhetoric in categorising Kurdishness during two 'moments of transition', the creation of the Kemalist Republic and the advent of the AKP in power. It is suggested that not only changes but also continuities in state

rhetoric play a significant role in the construction of ‘Kurdishness’ in these two moments. There is regional dimension to the display of Kurdishness. Specifically the boundaries of what constitutes Kurdishness contrast markedly by region. This is reflected in my respondents’ experience of discrimination and prejudice in their interactions with non-Kurds. Finally, family and neighbourhood also play a key role in shaping different forms. Specifically, the use of language in these environments plays an important role in shaping different forms of ‘Kurdishness’.

Declaration

In accordance with University regulations, I declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and the work contained herein is original and my own. I also confirm that this work or any part of it has not been submitted for any other degree or personal qualification.

Ceren Şengül

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*]
ANF	Fırat News Agency [*Ajansa Nûçeyan a Firatê*]
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party [*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*]
CHP	Republican People's Party [*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*]
DEHAP	Democratic People's Party [*Demokratik Halk Partisi*]
DTP	Democratic Society Party [*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*]
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party [*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*]
MHP	Nationalist Action Party [*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*]
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party [*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*]
RP	Welfare Party [*Refah Partisi*]
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Association

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCHING 'KURDISHNESS' IN TURKEY

As a non-Kurdish person who was born and grew up in Western part of Turkey, I, as most of the citizens of Turkey, have always watched and read about what was going on with regards to the Kurdish citizens of Turkey in newspapers and on the TV. Even though there is a considerable Kurdish population living in Western Turkey,[1] I had not had many interactions with Kurds on a personal level as far as I was aware of. This might have resulted from the fact that even by the end of 1990s, being a Kurd or speaking, singing, and/or writing in Kurdish were things that could result in trouble, so people might have been reluctant to bring up the issue of ethnicity. To give an example, as recent as 1999 (when I was 12-13 years old), Ahmet Kaya, a very famous folk singer, created controversy in an award ceremony when he declared that in his next album, he would sing one of his songs in Kurdish and he would shoot a music video in Kurdish, which was his native language. During his speech, people from the crowd, most of which were other musicians and/or people from the entertainment industry, started throwing forks and knives at him. He was physically attacked as he was returning to his table and the controversy surrounding this incident resulted in him being exiled from Turkey. He died one year later when he was in exile in France. As this thesis will discuss in Chapter 4, there have been some reforms since this incident with regards to the rights of Kurds living in Turkey. Some of the artists who were amongst the crowd protesting Ahmet Kaya that night sang songs and shot films in Kurdish language years later. However, it is still possible to see that the "shared memories" (Margalit 2002) of these kinds of incidents have contributed to forming some type of awareness amongst the people that discussing the issues of Kurds, Kurdishness, and Kurdish language in Turkey might lead to undesirable results.

That is why it is not surprising that whenever I tell people about the topic of this research, which is 'Kurdishness' in Turkey, I am often asked two questions: Firstly,

[1] As will also be mentioned in the following chapters of this thesis, ethnicity of the citizens is invisible in the population censuses in Turkey, so there is no official information on ethnicity. However, according to the unofficial information, Istanbul has approximately 3-4 million resident Kurds (two of my respondents, Mahsun and Halil, both mentioned this), which would make it a larger 'Kurdish city' than Diyarbakır, the 'spiritual capital' for Kurds.

they wonder if I am a Kurd; when I say 'no' to this question, they wonder why I am interested in such a topic. There were even some instances when the people I interacted with, without asking any questions, assumed that I was a Kurd when I told them about my research interest. Even though most of the time these are genuine questions exploring my interest in these topics, they also serve to trigger my curiosity on the definitions of concepts such as Kurds and Kurdishness: what do people have in mind when they ask if someone is a Kurd? Do they mean it in the ethnic sense of the word or does it have any other connotations? How should the receiver of this question respond to it? Is it possible for someone to answer 'yes' to the question if he or she has no ethnic origins? Or is it possible for someone to answer 'yes' to this question if he or she does not speak a word of Kurdish language? Would the answer to that question also depend on where someone is based in within Turkey? What exactly does the concept of 'Kurdishness' include in the Turkish context? Which factors influence how 'Kurdishness' is manifested and exhibited by individuals? As the daughter of a Jewish mother, I have always been sensitive to the issue of 'other' ethnicities living within the borders of a certain nation-state. It would not be far-fetched to argue that this might have triggered my interest in ethnicities and what shapes an ethnicity. Even though my sister and I were not raised in a Jewish culture, knowing that one is considered Jewish when his or her mother is Jewish has influenced the way I perceive ethnicity. If I can tell someone that I am Jewish just because my mother is Jewish even though I have no relevance to any cultural aspect of 'Jewishness', what would this reveal apart from illustrating the concept of "ethnies" (Smith 1989)? Even if I tell people that I am Jewish, does this have an impact on the way I perceive 'Jewishness' or on how other Jews perceive me?

This partially explains my interest in ethnicity but not why I specifically decided to study 'Kurdishness'. Whilst it is not possible to reduce this to a single incident, the intellectually stimulating environment during my undergraduate studies (Political Science and International Relations), the courses I took, and the discussions I had with the people surrounding me have all contributed to my intellectual curiosity with regards to how different ethnic groups live together within the borders of a nation-state. An initial reading of Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) has inspired me to explore how the existence of a "high culture" (Gellner 1983) within a nation-state

affects the nature of ethnic groups living within that state. This has contributed to developing one of the three sub-questions that this research is interested in: how does the state rhetoric play a role in manifestation of 'Kurdishness'?

With regards to the state rhetoric, it is necessary to provide some geopolitical and economic context of the period in which and before this research was conducted. The wave of neoliberalism that impacted many developing countries throughout the 1980s has also impacted Turkey. The military coup in 1980 saw all the parties, social and political organisations, and political elites banned from political activities. The return to elections and to parliamentary politics in 1983 saw Turgut Özal becoming the Prime Minister of Turkey. During his term as the Prime Minister, a process of "neoliberal restructuring" (Karadag 2010) started. The fact that all the former political elites were banned from the political arena meant that he had enough freedom to pursue his vision. Özal's policies such as privatisation of state-owned enterprises, fiscal austerity measures, and the introduction of VAT meant that the financial system was fully liberalised by 1989 (Karadag 2010: 18). This process also brought about Turkey's membership to Customs Union and pushing for the negotiations with the EU. This was essential in "promoting an important set of regulatory and democratization reforms" (Öniş 2008: 37).

The 1990s, however, was still a "lost decade" (Karadag 2010: 18) filled with financial crises, recession, and another memorandum, or "soft military coup" (Patton 2007: 341), in 1997. Known as the '28 February Process', the military interference that resulted in the collapse of the government led by the Welfare Party [*Refah Partisi*], or RP, was essential for several reasons. Firstly, RP was an Islamist party led by Necmettin Erbakan. Erbakan was one of the most important representatives of 'National Outlook' [*Milli Görüş*] ideology in Turkey. This ideology defended a Turkey with a more Islamic outlook, and a Turkey that is anti-Western, anti-Zionist, and with an ambivalent attitude towards democracy and secularism (Hale and Özbudun 2010: 5-8). Through interfering in civil politics led by an Islamist party, the military illustrated that, being the vanguard of secularism in Turkey, it would not tolerate any non-secular activities in Turkish politics. A similar scenario between the

military and Justice and Development Party [*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*], or AKP,[2] in its early periods would be repeated years later. This 'cold war' between the military establishment and the AKP with regards to the principle of secularism will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Secondly, this process contributed to the forming of a bloc that was pro-EU and wanted to push for reforms. Military forces in Turkey has always been the bedrock of the Kemalist[3] ideology. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, secularism and modernisation/Westernisation have been two of the most important principles of Kemalism. Interestingly enough, however, the military intervention of 1997 saw the inversion of the roles within the Turkish politics. The Kemalist elites were quick to point out that some of the demands of the EU were threatening the territorial unity of the state, hence they constituted an 'anti-EU' bloc. Islamists, who had been sceptical of the EU up until that point, collaborated with liberal secularists who were dissatisfied with the '28 February Process' and with those opportunists who saw it economically beneficial to join the EU (Patton 2007: 341-42).

The Helsinki Summit in 1999 was in a sense, then, victory for the pro-EU bloc as Turkey, for the first time, was recognised as a candidate for full membership. This was a good incentive to push for more reforms such as the abolition of the death penalty.[4] When AKP came to power in 2002, it continued this commitment to implementing what is known as 'Copenhagen criteria' in its early years. With regards to the Kurdish Question, there have been some reforms such as broadcasting in Kurdish language for certain hours (these reforms will be discussed in Chapter 4). One of the dominant points of view within the literature is that these types of reforms would have been "inconceivable in the absence of powerful incentives and pressures from the EU" (Öniş 2008: 39). Regardless of whether this is really the case or not, the early periods of AKP until 2005, with its commitment and enthusiasm for pushing for the EU membership, are considered "the golden age period" (Öniş 2008)

[2] AKP was founded in 2001 and it has constantly held majority of seats in the National Assembly since the general elections in 2002. As of today (August 2016), AKP still holds the majority of seats in the Assembly.

[3] *Kemalism* refers to the ideology consisting of set of principles Atatürk used as guidelines during his quest to build the ideal Turkish state in his mind. It was the official state ideology until the end of the one-party era in 1950. The influence of Kemalism on the formation of 'Turkishness' will be analysed in detail in Chapter 3.

[4] Müftüler Baç (2005) elaborates on these reforms motivated by the EU membership process.

of the EU process. These efforts were rewarded in December 2004 when the European Council decided to open the negotiation process.

However, the momentum that the AKP gained with its reforms and with its EU-focused agenda could be said to be lost after this date. In fact, the period since 2005 has been sometimes termed as "loose Europeanization" (Öniş 2008: 41). The loss of enthusiasm amongst the AKP cadre is witnessed in this statement of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan[5] in 2005: "...should we receive a negative answer then we will just rename the Copenhagen political criteria as the Ankara criteria and go our own way" (cited in Patton 2007: 339). Whether it is really "reform fatigue" (Patton 2007) on AKP's part, the negative or mixed signals sent by the EU (Gökalp & Ünsar 2008; Öniş 2008; Patton 2007), the loss of public support for the EU membership,[6] or a combination of all these factors, the important thing, for the purposes of this research, is that 'becoming European' has not been the priority (some may argue that it has even been abandoned) for the AKP since the end of their first period in 2007. At the time of writing this thesis (August 2016), there have been discussions about bringing the death penalty back, which would further illustrate that the commitment to the EU reforms has been abandoned. This context is useful for the discussion in Chapter 4, where the rhetoric of AKP periods is discussed in detail. The reforms that were implemented in the first period of the AKP (2002-2007) were, to a significant extent, motivated by the single-minded commitment to the EU membership. This included reforms with regards to the rights of Kurds. After the first period of the AKP, however, the policies of the AKP were largely dominated by the domestic context and more importantly, by the objectives of the AKP itself.

After this overview on the contextual situation of Turkey, it is now necessary to give some background information on Kurds of Turkey. They are the largest ethnic group in Turkey[7] and the language they speak within Turkey has two different variances: *Zazaki* and *Kurmancî*. *Kurmancî* is spoken more widespread, whereas *Zazaki* is

[5] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the founder of AKP. He was the leader of the party and served as Prime Minister from its establishment in 2002 until August 2014, when he became the first publicly-elected President of Turkey.

[6] Öniş cites that public support for EU membership dropped from 74% in 2002 to almost 50% in 2006-2007 (2008: 41).

[7] Again, the invisibility of ethnicity in data censuses leaves us with no official sources to give exact numbers. Aktürk (2012) states that almost 16% of the population in Turkey identifies himself as Kurdish in public opinion surveys (2012: 6).

mostly spoken by the people of Sivas in Central Anatolia. In Southeast Turkey, in the three different field sites where the data for this research were collected (Derik, Mardin, and Diyarbakır), *Kurmancî* is the language spoken by people and the speakers of that language also refer to it as *Kurmancî* instead of referring to it as Kurdish. In fact, one of the questions I was often asked during my stay in Southeast Turkey was "*Tu Kurmancî dizanî*" ("Do you speak *Kurmancî*")? When I discuss the language of the respondents throughout this thesis; therefore, I refer to *Kurmancî.* Both *Kurmancî* and *Zazaki* belong to different language families than Turkish, making Turkish and these languages mutually unintelligible. The mutual unintelligibility of Turkish and Kurdish (*Kurmancî* and *Zazaki*) has added, I would argue, to the issues surrounding language since some Turkish speakers, as the data in the upcoming chapters will show, express their discomfort about the fact that they cannot understand what Kurdish speakers are saying to each other. Southeast and Eastern part of Turkey are considered part of Kurdistan homeland. Regarding the borders of the Turkish state; however, Kurds are located across the state, having migrated from Southeast Turkey towards the Western part for decades.

The fact that Kurds have their own language, that they are scattered all over Turkey, and that they have been exposed to various policies of the state (see Chapters 3 and 4) presents an interesting case for scholars of ethnicity. How is the impact of these different factors reflected in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested? Within the literature, Kurds in Turkey have been widely researched. Some of these studies have focused on the 'Kurdish Question' and its evolution throughout the decades (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Kirişci and Winrow 1997; Yavuz and Özcan 2006; Yegen 1999; Yegen 2011); some have discussed the emergence of Kurdish nationalism and its evolution throughout the decades (Al 2015a; Entessar 1992; Natali 2005; Olson 1989; Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014; van Bruinessen 2000; Yavuz 2001). Recently, Aras (2014), in his anthropological work, studied the formation of Kurdishness in Turkey and defined Kurdishness as a state of being constructed by experiences of "political violence, fear of the state and pain" (2014: 190). The diversity of individual experiences with regards to 'Kurdishness'; however, has yet to be well-understood. Is it possible to discuss 'Kurdishness' as a single, unified concept? If not, what are

some of the ways in which 'Kurdishness' could be manifested? This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the diversity of experiences of 'Kurdishness'.

The Usage of Terminology

Throughout this thesis, the term 'Kurdishness' will be used in single quotation marks. The reason for this is that I wanted to use this term, throughout this thesis, as free from any preconceptions. As will be discussed in Chapter 2 where the methodological discussion is undertaken, I started the research with an idea in mind about what 'Kurdishness' entailed and how it is defined. This also had an effect on whom I chose as my interviewees in the initial stages of my fieldwork. That is, I started with a pre-defined perception of 'Kurdishness' and Kurds, which I later found out was a mistake and made the necessary changes within my methodology to adjust to it, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. For instance, there were instances of individuals who would not be considered Kurds by others, yet they insisted on me defining them as one. As will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, one of the things that this research argues is that 'Kurdishness' is in a constant state of construction by individuals through the use of different means. In accordance with this constructivist stance, I use the term 'Kurdishness' in quotation marks throughout this thesis. As the main argument that this thesis develops is the idea that forms of 'Kurdishness' are *customised* and *personalised*, it cannot be constrained within pre-existing definitions. That should not suggest that 'Kurdishness' is altogether a constructed idea that does not exist outside of people's minds. This thesis does not want to reinforce this idea; this research acknowledges that 'Kurdishness' as a separate ethnic category[8] exists. However, shaping the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' and deciding who are the members of this separate ethnic category, as this research suggests, are (re-) constructed and (re-)shaped by individuals themselves. Therefore, I decided to use the term 'Kurdishness' with quotation marks to refrain from all the connotations that comes with it.

[8] Here, I use the term 'category' in the way Brubaker (2002) uses and distinguish between an 'ethnic group' and 'ethnic category'. By distinguishing groups and categories, it is possible to distance from 'groups' as "discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring" (2002: 167) and to take ethnic categories as an "event", as something "that happens" (2002: 168). This will be further discussed in Chapter 1.

Overview of the Research Questions

This research, inspired by these thoughts, aims to explore the different ways in which 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey and through which factors these different forms are shaped by. To do this, it raises the question: how is 'Kurdishness' manifested and exhibited in Turkey by individuals? What factors influence how 'Kurdishness' is manifested by individuals?

As the anecdote that started this chapter suggests, the Kurdish language has been one of the points of contention with regards to the decades-long Kurdish Question. Speaking, singing, and/or writing in Kurdish language was not allowed and even though some of the restrictions on Kurdish language were lifted in 1992 during the presidency of Turgut Özal, there were still tensions with regards to the use of Kurdish language in public space afterwards, as the above-mentioned incident suggests. It would be fair to state that the situation has not remained the same: Serdar Ortaç, one of the singers from that night protesting Ahmet Kaya, made a public apology in 2013[9] and Ajda Pekkan, another famous singer who was amongst the protesting crowd, sang a song in Kurdish for the first time in 2009 (*Hürriyet* 11 March 2009). These developments suggest in a way that the words "Kurdish" or "Kurd" have become more 'normalised' compared to even as recent as 1999. However, the issues and discussions surrounding the use of Kurdish language still continue and as Chapter 4 shows, the demand to have education in mother tongue constitutes one of the aspects through which 'Kurdishness' is exhibited in its recent form. Even though, as mentioned earlier, there have been some relaxations with regards to the use of Kurdish language, the current generation grew up in a period where even the mention of the word 'Kurd' was not allowed. With this in mind, one of the things I was interested in was the role that the language plays in how an individual manifests his or her own 'Kurdishness'. Therefore, one of the questions that this research asks is: *what role does the Kurdish language play in the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'*?

[9] He stated his regret over those incidents many times publicly; he admitted that he was wrong and that Kurds should be able to express themselves in their own language (*Radikal* 29 March 2013).

Secondly, I was also interested in the effect of living in different parts within Turkey on manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. That is, how would an individual based in Western part of Turkey and another based in Southeast Turkey differ in terms of the ways they manifest their forms of 'Kurdishness'? With this aim, the second sub-question that this research is interested in is: *is there a regional dimension to the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'?* To do this, fieldwork was conducted in two different parts of Turkey: West and Southeast Turkey. The details of this fieldwork will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The third question that this research is interested in is the role of the state rhetoric. As will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the state rhetoric during the early Republican period of Turkey (1923-1938) and AKP period (from 2002 onwards) show significant differences but also significant continuities. Based on this, another question that this research aims to explore is: *what role does state rhetoric play on the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'?*

To explore and answer these questions, this research relied on three different methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document research. The research questions and the methodologies that were used in this research will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Outline of This Thesis

Chapter 1 will provide the theoretical framework that this research relies on. The theoretical framework consists of two main parts: The first part of the chapter discusses theories of nationalism and ethnicity.[10] The discussion within this section suggests a two-dimensional framework that encompasses both state-led and bottom-up approaches towards ethnicity. Gellner's concept of "high culture" (Gellner 1983) and his theory of modernisation will be discussed by taking into account the criticisms it has received. In 'bottom-up' approaches towards ethnicity construction, the focus will be on everyday ethnicity and how interactions amongst 'ordinary people' could be analysed to understand ethnicity construction. The second part of

[10] Even though there is a distinction within the literature between the concepts of 'nations' and 'ethnicities' (Brass 1991), throughout this thesis, I do not distinguish between nations and ethnicities for the reasons I will discuss in Chapter 1.

the chapter will discuss theories of ethnic boundary making. Through which means are ethnicities shaped and constructed? How are boundaries between ethnicities defined and created? How is this literature useful to understand 'Kurdishness' in Turkey? Boundary theories are useful to understand the interaction within ethnic categories and they provide an explanation for how certain members belonging to ethnic categories could switch identities across different contexts.

Chapter 2 presents the methodological discussion of this thesis. What are the research questions? How were the field sites chosen? What were the problems that were faced during the process of data collection? As mentioned earlier, I relied on three different methods to explore the research questions. I describe and justify the use of those methods (interviews, participant observation, and document research) and provide a discussion on why this "triangulation of methods" (Denzin 1978) was necessary in order to collect the data.

Chapter 3 is the first of the two chapters that deal with the question of the state rhetoric during the two 'moments of transition'. This chapter focuses on the state rhetoric during the early Republican period (1923-1938) and how 'Kurdishness' was manifested during that period. Early Republican period presents the first 'moment of transition' within the Turkish state in terms of its rhetoric. To do this, it first discusses the state rhetoric during this period through the use of statements of the state leaders, of state regulations, and of laws. The state rhetoric during this period relied on the principles of Westernisation/modernisation, secularism, and centralism, which made Kurds, according to the state rhetoric, as the obstacles to reach the goals of the newly-established nation-state since they were seen as 'anti-modern', 'anti-secular', and 'anti-central'. The forms of 'Kurdishness' that were observed in this period, accordingly, were shaped by a combination of ethnic, religious, and tribal factors. The discussion in this chapter also provides the basis of the comparison in the next chapter, which deals with the state rhetoric during AKP period.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion on the relationship between the state rhetoric and 'Kurdishness'. This time, the focus will be on the AKP period (from 2002 onwards), the second 'moment of transition'. The first part of the chapter is devoted to discussing the state rhetoric during AKP period. Through the use of the party

documents, of the statements of the leaders, and the policies that were adopted during this period, it provides a comparison with the state rhetoric of the early Republican period. This discussion suggests that there are both significant changes and continuities between the two state rhetoric: the decrease in the significance of the secularism principle during the AKP period has given space for the expression of different ethnicities, which allowed the AKP leaders to unite Turks and Kurds through the use of terms such as 'Muslim brothers'. The emphasis on Turkish language and on the centralisation of the state; however, has remained as significant as during the early Republican period. The data show that in its current form, 'Kurdishness' is mainly manifested through a focus on two demands: education in mother tongue and the right to self-determination. The differences in the forms of 'Kurdishness' that are exhibited during the early Republican period and during the AKP period are explained through the changes and continuities between the state rhetoric of those two periods.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus of the thesis from the state rhetoric to the question of regions. Through the fieldwork data, I first show other ways that 'Kurdishness' is manifested by the respondents: some exhibit this through an attachment to cultural elements; others through an attachment to the Kurdish language; whereas some others, without being attached to either Kurdish language or culture, manifest their 'Kurdishness' through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969). This chapter shows how everyday encounters of discrimination and prejudice that individuals receive, "informal, everyday discrimination" (Wimmer 2013: 75), is effective in (re-)shaping the boundaries of 'Kurdishness'. It is possible to observe these acts of 'everyday discrimination' in both parts of Turkey. How different regions are effective in the process of boundary making is observed in the different contextual environments they generate for receiving everyday encounters of discrimination and prejudice.

Chapter 6 continues the focus on the interactions amongst 'ordinary people'. The data in this chapter suggests the importance of two factors in the everyday lives of individuals for constructing different forms of 'Kurdishness': the family environment and neighbourhood/social status. This chapter explores the role that the language plays on manifestation of 'Kurdishness' through these two factors. Along with the everyday acts of discrimination and prejudice that are discussed in Chapter 5, family

environment and neighbourhood constitute the everyday practices that play a significant role on manifestation of different forms of ‘Kurdishness’. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the ways through which boundaries of ‘Kurdishness’ are shown through the narratives of individuals.

1. (RE-) MAKING BOUNDARIES OF 'KURDISHNESS': A TWO-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TOWARDS ETHNICITY

How can 'Kurdishness' in Turkey be understood? This chapter will present a theoretical discussion that provides the necessary framework to unpack 'Kurdishness'. The theoretical discussion will be divided into two parts. First part will focus on theories of nationalism and ethnicity. As this research suggests an approach towards ethnicity that encompasses both state-led and bottom-up factors, this discussion will also focus on these two elements. Firstly, Ernest Gellner's theory of modernisation, specifically his concept of 'high culture', and criticisms to his theory will be discussed. The aim of this first section is to show the relevant aspects of Gellner's theory of modernisation with regards to this research whilst, at the same time, showing the aspects that his theory cannot explain. It will discuss why it is necessary, for the purposes of this research, to complement Gellner's concept of 'high culture' with a focus on the actions of the state. The second half of this section will focus on the literature on everyday ethnicity. The discussions in Chapter 5 and 6 will illustrate the role that interactions amongst 'ordinary people' play on manifesting different forms of 'Kurdishness'. The second half of the chapter will be devoted to the literature on boundary theories. This literature is helpful in understanding the situational variability of different forms of 'Kurdishness'.

1.1. A Two-Dimensional Approach Towards Ethnicity

1.1.1. Gellner's Theory of Modernisation and Its Criticisms

Ernest Gellner, considered one of the pioneers of modernist theories of nationalism, first outlined his ideas on the relationship between nationalism and modernism in Chapter 7 of *Thought and Change* (1964), to later develop it in a comprehensive theory in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983). What makes Gellner's argument modernist is his argument that nationalism is not something 'natural'. It is a contingent phenomenon and that "there is nothing natural or universal about possessing a 'nationality'" (1964: 150-151). It is something that has been brought

about by modernity and its requirements. Nations are not 'sleeping beauties' waiting to be 'awakened' by the national 'awakener' (1983: 48). Instead of presenting every aspect of Gellner's theory of modernisation which would be a huge task, this section aims to overview the elements that are relevant for the purposes of this research: the necessity of a standardised language, a standard education system and a 'high culture' in modern societies and the fact that these could only be made possible in an era of nation-states.[11] The way Gellner presents his argument about the emergence of nations and nationalism is in such a logical order that it is necessary to go through the same thought process to fully grasp his argument. The following part aims to do that.

Gellner starts his analysis with the situation of agrarian societies that existed before industrialisation. Pre-modern societies, which were usually based on feudal relationships between lords and peasants, are highly advanced in their structure in the sense that "individuals are ascribed roles which determine and circumscribe their activities and relationships to others" (1964: 154). This advanced structure also brings with it a highly advanced culture in the sense that social relationships are richly symbolised in manner, conduct etc. This situation results in linguistic communication not being a crucial aspect of everyday life:

> In the stable, repetitive relationship of lord and peasant, it matters very little whether they both speak (in the literal sense) the same language. They have long ago sized each other up: each knows what the other wants, the tricks he may get up to, the defences and counter-measures which, in the given situation, are available, and so on (1964: 154).

This kind of structure meant that the political and the cultural boundaries do not have to be congruent in agrarian societies. A prince, a lord, a king, a sultan might speak totally different languages to their peasants, to their people, to their subjects and that would not prevent forming an effective co-operating group (1964: 154). A common language between the ruler and the ruled was not necessary since "context, tone, gesture, personality and situation were everything" (1983: 33). There is another

[11] For Gellner, the ideology of 'nationalism' asserts that "the political and the national unit should be congruent" (1983: 1), which implies that nationalism is inextricably linked to the existence of nation-states. This argument is consistent with other ideas within his theory: Industrial age and modernisation necessitate the existence of states and "the problem of nationalism does not arise when there is no state" (1983: 5), so it follows that nationalism, and hence nation-states, are modern phenomena instead of being 'primordial' concepts.

characteristics; however, of agrarian societies that differs substantially than the industrial societies: its division of labour.

The division of labour in agrarian societies, according to Gellner, contains less specialisms than industrial societies. However, the level of those specialisms is so much higher than industrial societies could ever imagine. They are the products of "lifelong, very prolonged and totally dedicated training" and they are "extremely labour and skill-intensive" (1983: 26). This makes those specialists in agrarian societies *complementary* to each other, instead of *replacing* each other. As a result, the reproduction of individuals within these societies does not rely on any kind of educational specialist: The education and specialisation of youth happens 'on the job' "as part and parcel of the general business of living" (1983: 31). The great majority of agrarian societies consists of "self-reproducing units" (1983: 31-32). Clerks, one of the specialist groups forming the agrarian society, are those who transmit literacy.

The transition to industrial societies has changed this structure completely. Firstly, the language itself has become a crucial part of day-to-day communication. Instead of context-dependent, personal communication that was part of the structure in agrarian societies, members of industrial societies have to rely on "written, impersonal, context-free, to-whom-it-may-concern type messages" (1983: 35). Members of industrial society "must constantly communicate with a large number of other men, with whom they frequently have no previous association, and with whom communication must consequently be explicit, rather than relying on context" (1983: 35). This change in communication has made a standardised language necessary for better interaction amongst the members of industrial societies. This crucial change within the structure has had two important consequences: a) "those who communicate must speak the same language, in some sense or other", and b) culture has become very important – "culture being, essentially, the manner in which one communicates, in the broadest sense" (1964: 155). Secondly, the nature of the division of labour has also changed. Contrary to agrarian societies, the reproduction of individuals in industrial societies is no longer performed within the sub-communities but it has become "part of the division of labour" (1983: 32). This means that in industrial societies, every man has now become a clerk and that clerks are horizontally mobile (1964: 160). The crucial aspect about the (im)mobility of the

clerks (i.e. members of industrial societies) is that they could easily be substituted or replaced by other 'products' (other clerks) of the same education system but less substitutable "for those produced by other and rival machines" (1964: 160)[12] because different education systems have different standards in different mediums.

As a result, an individual's education becomes the most important investment for him and the education system providing this education must be standardised in terms of its medium of instruction to provide effective communication between the members of industrial societies. This "educational infrastructure", as Gellner calls it (1983: 37), is too large, too costly and only an organisation that has the necessary resources to sustain it could manage this. This organisation is no other than a nation-state, the biggest of these organisations. This discussion so far provides a partial explanation for the emphasis on a standardised language and a standard education system given by nation-states. Chapter 3 will discuss the early Republican period (1923-1938) and discuss how the Turkish language and the education system standardised by the leaders of nation-building provide two of the essential elements of Turkish 'high culture'. As will be discussed shortly, it also explains why citizens who do not belong to Turkish 'high culture' are left in a disadvantaged position compared to citizens of 'high culture'.

Gellner's argument, the part that has been explained so far, leads the reader to a logical conclusion about the emergence of nation-states and nationalism. To sum up in Gellner's words, "modern loyalties are centred on political units whose boundaries are defined by the language (in the wider or in the literal sense) of an educational system" and "when these boundaries are made rather than given, they must be large enough to create a unit capable of sustaining an educational system" (1964: 163). Moreover, these units also must have an atmosphere in which *all* the members of that unit can speak and produce, a culture for which *all* the members of that unit should be the same. This culture can "no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture" but it must be a great or 'high culture', which is literate and training-sustained (1983: 38). Literacy and the standard education system is so central to

[12] For Gellner, this point shows why people become nationalists in the first place: They do not become nationalists because of sentimental reasons but they become nationalists through "genuine, objective, practical necessity" (1964: 160). This could be contrasted with primordialist scholars who emphasise the importance of emotions and affect, which will be discussed later in more detail.

Gellner's theory that he even refers to states as having "the monopoly of legitimate education" (1983: 34), influenced by Max Weber's famous description of the state.

What if, however, some members of industrial societies are raised in sub-units that have a language different than the one in which the education system standardised? Gellner mentions this in one of the chapters in *Thought and Change*:

> If every man is a clerk, it is a great help if the language *in* which he is literate is identical with, or at least fairly close to, the vernacular in which he was reared in the family context. Continuity between the idioms of home and school facilitate the task of education (1964: 161).

This would also imply, then, that a member who uses a different language in his or her 'private sphere' than the medium of instruction of the standardised education system could be in a disadvantaged position. This argument also implies that in order to enter into the 'high culture' of the nation-state, the knowledge of the language in which the education system is standardised within that nation-state is essential. This argument and its implications will be reflected in the following chapters: In Chapter 3, the importance of Turkish language for the establishment of a homogeneous 'Turkishness' will be discussed. The state-led imposition of a standardised Turkish language in order to create a 'high Turkish culture' will be considered in relation to Gellner's argument. Chapter 4, on the other hand, will focus on the relationship between the changes and the continuities within state rhetoric and manifestation of 'Kurdishness' and it will show that one of the two ways through which 'Kurdishness', in its current form, expresses itself is the demand to have education in mother tongue. If the education system is *the* medium of reproducing individuals within modern societies, then it would be normal to assume that the side that holds the material 'means of production',[13] which, according to Gellner, would be the nation-state in modern societies, would also have the mental 'means of production'. In the case of this research, the answer to the question of who is going to have power over the education system has been the same, as will be explained in Chapter 3: the Turkish state. Gellner's theory of modernisation, as a response to it, provides a partial explanation as to why there has been so much emphasis by the leaders of nation-building on a standardised education system in a unified language. Chapter 4

[13] I am using the concept of 'means of production' here as was originally defined by Marx in *Das Kapital* [1867] (2009).

will show that even though there have been significant changes within the state rhetoric since 2002 with regards to the use of religion compared to the early Republican period (1923-1938), the state rhetoric surrounding language has remained as significant. This, in turn, has had a significant influence on recent manifestations of 'Kurdishness'.

The emphasis given by Gellner on literacy, education system, homogeneity and the establishment of a 'high culture', which is a "standardized, literacy- and education-based systems of communication" (1983: 54) is useful to understand the tension between the nation-state and an ethnic group who does not belong to the 'high culture'. With its focus on the establishment of homogeneous nation-states that are required by the modernity, it dictates an approach that focuses on structural forces. It is not enough; however, to understand the more bottom-up movements that might emerge from stateless nations. As will be discussed shortly, Gellner's theory, with its emphasis on structural forces, also underplays the role of the state in nationalism. The role of the state through the use of rhetoric will be the focus of Chapters 3 and 4. However, this research explores 'Kurdishness' not only through state-led forces but also "from below" (Hobsbawm 1990: 10). In Hobsbawm's words: "While [nationalism]...is constructed essentially from above, [it]...cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist" (1990: 10). Chapters 5 and 6 will discuss the different contextual environments that are produced through the interactions of 'ordinary people'. Therefore, as explained in the beginning of this chapter, this research suggests a theoretical framework that explains both aspects of ethnicity. Other than its overemphasis on structural forces, what are the aspects in Gellner's theory that have been criticised? Now, I will briefly focus on that discussion before moving onto the discussion on 'bottom-up' explanations on ethnicity.

Gellner's modernisation theory provides an essential framework to understand the homogeneity and the existence of a 'high culture' necessitated by the modernity. As is the case with every other theory; however, it has been criticised on some grounds.

One point of criticism to Gellner's theory of modernisation comes from the point of view of primordialism. Gellner, with his emphasis on modernisation and industrialisation for the emergence of nation-states and nationalism, is considered one of the pioneers of the modernist way of thinking. Primordialism, on the other hand, generally is the approach that argues for the "antiquity and naturalness of nations" (Özkırımlı 2000: 64) and primordialists generally argue that ethnic identity is "a function of strong emotional ties which are based upon common biological origin and the distinctive past of a group" (Matsuo 1992: 506). It was a term that was firstly used by Shils in 1957 and then, Geertz in 1963 (Eller and Coughlan 1993). Eller and Coughlan present three common ideas that are found in the primordialist literature:

1) Primordial identities are 'given', *a priori*, underived, prior to all experience and interaction – in fact, all interaction is carried out *within* the primordial realities. Primordial attachments are 'natural, even 'spiritual', rather than sociological.
2) Primordial sentiments cannot be analysed in relation to social interaction.
3) Primordialism is essentially a question of emotion or affect (1993: 187).

Connor (1994) emphasises this last point regarding primordialism by arguing that nations and nationalist sentiments cannot be analysed in rationalistic terms. For him, nations are something nonrational (notice that he does not say 'irrational') and rationalistic and scientific explanations of how nations and nationalism emerge (like the modernist accounts) fail to "reflect the emotional depth of national identity" (1994: 206). The nonrationality of the nations could be reached, according to Connor, through national symbols such as swastika, through poetry, through music, and through the use of familial metaphors such as homeland of our particular people (1994: 204-205).

This thesis argues for a 'Kurdishness' that is constantly being (re-)shaped as a result of both state-led factors (Chapter 4) and everyday interactions with 'ordinary people' (Chapters 5 and 6), instead of being something "given" (Geertz 1973). Geertz firstly used the term 'primordialism' in 'The Interpretation of Cultures'. Consider his definition of a 'primordial attachment':

> By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens" – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the *assumed*

> "givens" – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular *social* practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an *ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves* (italics added for emphasis, 1973: 259).

This definition itself has been interpreted differently by different scholars. Eller and Coughlan interpreted this to argue that primordialism is something 'unintelligible' and 'unsociological' that "renders the concept theoretically vacuous and empirically indefensible" (1993: 187). For them, the use of the word 'ineffable' makes the end of the analysis inevitable (1993: 189). Other interpretations; however, have emphasised the word 'assumed' and argued that those 'givens' are not natural nor ultimately 'given' but rather, they are 'assumed' to be 'given' by individuals themselves (Özkırımlı 2000; Tilley 1997). This is similar to Smith's reading of Geertz when he argued that what Geertz is saying is "not that the world is constituted by an objective primordial reality", but that "many of us believe in primordial objects and feel their power" (1998: 158). The discussion; therefore, is not much about whether Geertz is primordialist[14] but about whether or not this primordialism is something 'given' or 'assumed'. It is important to add here that Tilley, in her analysis of Geertz, describes his approach to culture as 'constructivist' (1997: 502) based on this quotation from *The Interpretation of Cultures*:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in *webs of significance he himself has spun*, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an *interpretive* one in search of meaning (italics added for emphasis, 1973: 5).

Here, it is possible to see culture as something that an individual has himself created around himself (webs of significance he himself has spun) and as something that has been shaped through the *interpretation* of the individual. In this sense, I see this quotation, as Tilley does, as part of a constructivist understanding, which is what this

[14] Özkırımlı (2000) categorises him as a "cultural primordialist" (p. 72) and Tilley (1997) uses the phrase "the Geertzian primordiality" (p. 513) in her interpretation of Geertz. She adds that Geertz's primordialism has more of a 'first in a series' meaning, to "highlight the ways in which foundation concepts provide the basis for other ideas, values, customs or ideologies held by the individual" (p. 502).

research bases itself on. Anthony Smith[15] stated his criticisms on Gellner's theory on the grounds that modernity only tells half of the story and for a scholarly understanding of nations, the geneaologies of the nations should also be studied. In other words, the question of if nations have "navels" (Gellner 1995) is essential to explain which nations, and why those nations instead of others, will emerge (Smith 1996: 377-378).

The second account of criticisms could be categorised as the 'functionalist' criticisms (Mouzelis 1998; O'Leary 1998; Taylor 1998). As mentioned earlier, this refers to the lack of agency implied in Gellner's account. In some sense, it can be considered similar to historical materialism[16] in its structure. O'Leary (1998) explains that the functionalist characteristics of Gellner's theory could be summarised in a couple of points: "Nationalism is an *effect* of modernisation,...is *unintended* by the actors producing modernisation,... and the causal relationship between nationalism and modernisation is not recognised by the agents operating in modernising societies" (1998: 52). This functionalist character of Gellner's theory also makes it teleological (Mouzelis 1998: 161). The certain characteristics of modern societies requiring a 'high culture' and a context-free medium of communication (a standardised language) does not leave much room for the intentions of the actors (i.e. the leaders of the state building and the masses). This feature is emphasised by Gellner when he states that instead of nationalism as an ideology imposing homogeneity on modern societies, "it is rather that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism" (1983: 39). By emphasising functionality of nationalism, Gellner downplays the role of the states. This is pointed out by Hall in his analysis of Gellner's theory of nationalism as a whole. One of the reasons for choosing 'The State of the Nation' as the title of his edited book, he states, is to emphasise the argument that "nationalism cannot be

[15] It is essential here to note that Smith does not define himself as a primordialist and in fact, he agrees that nations, in their current forms, are modern as is nationalism (1996: 385). His main criticism of Gellner is based on the argument that nations, unlike what Gellner suggests, did not come out of nowhere and it is possible to see the origins of some of the modern day nations in pre-modern *ethnies*. Origin myths, cultures, and shared memories are essential in the 'creation' (similar to Gellner's view of the nations as 'creations') of nations out of these pre-existing *ethnies*. In that sense, Smith sees himself similar to an 'evolutionist' (1996: 385).

[16] Historical materialism, usually associated with the writings of Marx, is the deterministic approach to history that explains social phenomena through economic forces that are beyond human agency.

understood without systematically bringing politics back in" (1998: 3). By "stressing the impact of the actions of states" (1998: 3), one can understand the influence of 'state-led' actions on ethnicities. The discussions on Chapter 3 and 4 are related to this argument: The establishment of a Turkish 'high culture' during the early Republican period (1923-1938) could be understood through the actions of the leaders of nation-building (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 will look at the state rhetoric during AKP period (from 2002 on) and discuss the changes and continuities within the state rhetoric (compared to the Kemalist period of the state), again, through the actions of leaders. This way, the discussion in those chapters will present a modified illustration of the concept of 'high culture' with the added element of agency.

Michael Mann also makes his criticisms of Gellner's theory on the grounds of being too functionalist: He argues that nationalism is a product of more contingent forces than Gellner suggested. Through his analysis of four case studies (Britain, Austria, Prussia, and France), Mann explains that nationalism in modern Europe emerged rather as a mass phenomenon, spread through "the extensive communication of discursive literacy" (1996: 150).[17] According to Mann, industralisation and modernity, then, did not require nationalism, as Gellner suggested, but it required the emergence of discursive literacy and the politics of popular representation, which, in turn, helped forming several varieties of modern nationalism (1996: 168).

The third type of criticism targets the theory's incompleteness in its explanations. Charles Taylor emphasises this point in his re-evaluation of Gellner's theory:

> Some peoples assimilate; they go without much protest in the mix-master of school and army, and lose their regional dialects. They enter as peasants, and emerge as Frenchmen. Why do some put up a fight and create nationalist movements, while others do not? Or again, if there are two languages widely spoken in a given state, why is it so difficult to come to some arrangement around a form of bilingualism (Taylor 1998: 194)?

This point could be considered in relation to the previous point made by primordialists about the lack of attention given to the emotions and affect by modernists. The necessity to create a 'high culture' based on 'Turkish' ideals was the primary goal of the early Republican leaders during the early years of the Republic,

[17] This point is related to Anderson's argument about a 'print culture' being the essential element in the creation of "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983).

as will be discussed in Chapter 3. This thesis; however, explores the concept of 'Kurdishness' and how it is manifested in a nation-state that is established on a Turkish 'high culture'. Is it possible that despite the attempts to establish a Turkish 'high culture', the cultural elements and languages other than Turkish are still relevant to individuals' everyday lives? Chapter 4 will provide data on the current demands of the respondents regarding the education in mother tongue. If the standardised language and the standard education system are what produce the 'clerks' in modern societies, then can this theory explain why there is a consistent demand amongst the respondents to have education in a language that does not belong to the 'high culture'? Also, there are states with more than one official language. Does the existence of these states undermine Gellner's theory? O'Leary (1998) mentions this point and explains that states such as Canada and Belgium did not concern him due to the weaknesses of Belgian and Canadian nationalisms, which would prove his point (1998: 44-45). Gellner was aware; however, about the case of Switzerland. He explained the abnormality of the Swiss case by arguing that Swiss society was a traditional one which "has weathered modernisation" (1964: 174) and even though the peoples of Switzerland do not in the literal sense speak the same language, in a sense they still do (1964: 174).

Gellner (1997) categorised the criticisms towards his theory and systematically replied to them in his final years. It is not the intention here to explain how Gellner himself perceived his criticisms. Before concluding this section, it is necessary to clarify why and how this research makes use of some of the concepts in his theory.

The existence of different ethnicities within one state was something that Gellner, not surprisingly, considered as well. He discusses this situation and explains the possibilities in *Conditions of Liberty* (1994): "Men then had two options, if they were to diminish such discomfort: they could change their own culture, or they could change the nature of the political unit" (1994: 108). These two options, termed as 'assimilation' and 'boundary change' by Stepan (1998: 220), are the ways through which, according to Gellner, a culture-state congruence could be produced. Despite the advantages that belonging to the 'high culture' and going through the standardised education system bring, it is possible that individuals *consciously* make a choice of either belonging to the Kurdish culture (however they define this) or

expressing their demands to have education in Kurdish language. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the Turkish 'high culture' was, during the early Republican period, established based on the ideals of the Republican ideology. These ideals constituted the criteria that defined how 'the ideal Turk' should be and Kurds, who were seen as 'mountain Turks', needed to be converted into 'the ideal Turks'. In a way, Gellner's concept of 'high culture' provides the necessary explanation for why a 'high culture' is essential for the leaders of the nation-state, yet it cannot sufficiently explain why and how, despite all these functional necessities, 'Kurdishness' can still be manifested within the Turkish state. Gellner also, as discussed earlier, overemphasised the functionality in his argument. As the discussion in Chapter 3 will show, it is not always the case that a 'high culture' was necessitated by the modernity itself; it is also essential to take into account the actions of the state leaders.

Similar to Hobsbawm's suggestion of "nationalism from below" (1990: 10) and Mann's argument of "politics of popular representation" (1996: 168), this research suggests a theoretical framework of ethnicities that should also be taking into account interactions of 'ordinary people'. The second part of the theoretical discussion aims to expand on how to study ethnicities 'from below'. As Wimmer points out, everyday interaction of individuals is one of the ways recent literature on boundary making emphasises (2013: 45). So, the next section will discuss how the literature on 'everyday ethnicity' is useful to understand ethnicity construction "from below" (Hobsbawm 1990: 10).

1.1.2. 'Bottom-up' Approaches Towards Ethnicity

Before analysing how 'bottom-up' approaches towards ethnicity have been discussed within the literature, it is necessary to provide the explanation for the use of the terms 'ethnicity' and 'nations'. The concepts of 'nations' and 'ethnicities' have been discussed widely in the literature (Akzin 1964; Brass 1991; Eriksen 1993; Fenton 2003) and the relationship between nation, nation-state and ethnic groups has also been a point of contention (Deutsch 1953; Emerson 1960). Nations are considered

the politicised forms of ethnic communities with recognised group rights; that is, an ethnic group who has achieved its aspiration of national status and recognition (Brass 1991: 20). Even though this has not been the case for Kurds within Turkey, this thesis shows that 'Kurdishness' in Turkey is a concept that develops independently of the aspirations for a nation-state. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I do not draw a distinction between the concepts of 'nations' and 'ethnicities'.

Constructivist stance on identity has been prevailing for some time now in the social sciences especially when it comes to social construction of ethnicity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2000; Giddens 1991; Jaspal and Cinnirella 2012; Laitin 1998; Nagel 1994; Somers 1994). In this chapter so far, some constructivist ideas have already been introduced when discussing Geertz's constructivist approach to culture (Tilley 1997). David Laitin (1998) states that the debates on 'identity' in the academic literature have been structured around the two camps of 'primordialism' and 'constructivism'. At this point, I would argue that having a 'modernist' approach towards the concepts of nations and nationalism would necessarily result in, at least partially, adopting some constructivist ideas. If nations themselves are "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), and products of modernity (Gellner 1983), then it is possible to consider nations and ethnicities, from these scholars' point of view, as socially constructed.

Fearon and Laitin (2000) discuss three different ways of constructing an identity. Their first category, which takes social and economic processes as agents of construction, is exemplified by the ideas of Gellner, Anderson, and Deutsch, who all argue that national identities are the result of "macrohistorical forces" (2000: 851). Another way of constructing identities could be through discourses (Fearon and Laitin 2000; Foucault 1972). According to Fearon and Laitin, discourses produce individuals and they "move independently of the actions of any particular individual" (2000: 851). Under this category, they also discuss the argument that "the social construction of group identities necessarily involves differentiating one's self or one's group from an Other" (2000: 851). These two categories; however, again have

the similar characteristics that was mentioned above when Gellner's theory of modernisation was discussed. By putting emphasis on socio-economic processes and on discourses as the agents of construction, these two approaches do not leave much room for the individual agents. Whilst it could be argued that differentiating one's self or one's group from an Other involves an active engagement with the discourse and hence, acknowledging the actions of individuals as factors influencing the social construction, Fearon and Laitin's categorisation discusses discourses as something 'independent of any particular individual'.

The agency of the individuals is acknowledged in their third category of 'individuals as agents of social construction'. There are two sub-categories here according to Fearon and Laitin; elites as the agents of social construction and social construction 'on the ground' (2000: 853-855). Fearon and Laitin explain how elites contribute to the social construction of identities in relation to ethnic violence:

> Ethnic violence is explained as both a means and a by-product of political elites' efforts to hold or acquire power. Elites foment ethnic violence to build political support; this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favors more violence (2000: 853).

This idea could also be applied to other cases where elites are not involved with any ethnic violence. In the case of Turkey, for instance, 'elites' were the leaders of nation-state building during the establishment of the Republic and the early Republican period, as will be explained in Chapter 3. Even though there was no ethnic violence during the period of nation-state building in the sense that Turks and Kurds were not fighting against each other,[18] the efforts of the Kemalist elites to establish a homogeneous Turkish 'high culture', relied heavily on the creation of an ideal 'Turkishness' which automatically excluded all the 'non-Turkish' elements within the state. The approach of 'elites as agents as social construction' puts importance on the individualistic element of social construction, yet it also contains the element of a 'state-led' approach.

[18] As will be discussed in Chapter 3, there were rebellions within the Kurdish ethnic group after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 but those were against the institution of the state and against the state ideology itself, rather than being against Turks in general.

Social construction ‘on the ground’, on the other hand, advocates a more ‘bottom-up’ approach. Fearon and Laitin define it as social identities as being “produced and reproduced through the everyday actions of ordinary folk, that is, ‘on the ground’” (2000: 855). They provide more detail into how this process exactly works:

> Individuals think of themselves in terms of a particular set of social categories, which lead them to act in ways that collectively confirm, reinforce, and propagate these identities. Members of marginalized categories, or individual dissidents, may quietly subvert or loudly contest common assumptions about particular categories. Their actions may then result in the construction of new or altered identities (2000: 855-856).

The individuals here are actively involved in the process of shaping the boundaries between *them* and *others*, hence re-constructing their identities.

The importance of everyday interactions for ethnicities by focusing on ‘ordinary people’ has not been new in the literature (Billig 1995; Cohen 1996; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008; Miller-Idriss 2006; Thompson and Day 1999; Wodak, et al. 2009). Within the context of Turkey, Saracoglu (2009) discusses the importance of everyday life interactions in the formation of an ‘exclusive recognition’ towards Kurds. Based on the research he conducted in the Western city of Izmir, he discusses the concept of ‘exclusive recognition’ as something that “has been primarily developed independently within the circle of everyday life social relations” (2009: 642). Through “superficial contacts with and observations of Kurdish migrants in the everyday life of Turkish cities” (2009: 642), a discourse is being constructed by ‘ordinary people’ that is exclusively against Kurdish migrants. Even though Saracoglu’s study focuses on the construction of anti-Kurdish discourse amongst non-Kurds, this concept is important in showing how everyday interactions amongst ordinary people could play a role in constructing boundaries between ethnicities. Due to the migration from East and Southeast Anatolia to Western part of Turkey since the 1980s, Kurdish immigrants constitute an integral part of everyday life in Western cities. Through these interactions with Kurdish immigrants, individuals, as the agents of ‘exclusive recognition’, construct an anti-Kurdish discourse that shapes boundaries. For instance, by labelling Kurdish immigrants as ‘ignorant’, ‘aggressive’, ‘separatist’, and ‘living by ill-gotten gain’, this discourse not only recognises Kurds as a separate group but also consciously excludes them. This discourse is in contrast

to the official ideology during the early Republican period and to the state rhetoric until the early 1990s that did not recognise Kurds as a different ethnic group. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the official Kemalist ideology of the early Republican period considered Kurds as 'mountain Turks' that had forgotten their 'true' ethnic identity and needed to be reminded of it. Chapter 4 will also discuss changes and continuities within the state rhetoric with regards to Kurds.

Fox and Miller-Idriss, in their study of 'everyday nationhood', argue that nations, apart from being the product of structural forces, are "simultaneously the practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in mundane activities in their everyday lives" (2008: 554). These mundane activities could be expressed in discursive or non-discursive ways such as the shrugs, grimaces, chuckles, winces and snorts that accompany discourses (2008: 555). In their examination of nationhood in everyday life, they look at four different ways in which nations could be produced and reproduced in everyday life, one of which is relevant for the purposes of this research: *talking the nation*.

'Talking the nation' could refer to both 'talking *about* the nation' and 'talking *with* the nation'. Being active agents of construction, 'ordinary people' define nationhood by their talk (2008: 539). For the purposes of this research; however, 'talking *with* the nation' is more relevant. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss, during the course of everyday life, people do not talk about the nation most of the time. Then, the important task for researchers is to explore when nations (or ethnicities) become salient for individuals. What are the different everyday contexts that determine the salience of nations, or, in Fox and Miller-Idriss' words, "when is the nation" (2008: 540)? Fox and Miller-Idriss argue that language, along with other audible and visual cues, provides one of the contexts in which nations are manifested. In other words, language and other audible cues such as the accent in which an individual is speaking the language "trigger an awareness of category membership through everyday interaction" (2008: 541). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the accent in which the respondents speak Turkish is one of the cues for individuals to make other people aware of their ethnicity. The encounters of discrimination and prejudice they receive, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, are sometimes due to the linguistic cues the respondents exhibit. Those encounters of discrimination and prejudice, in turn, play a

significant role in (re-)shaping of the boundaries of 'Kurdishness', as Chapter 5 will discuss.

The importance of 'ordinary people' in understanding ethnicity and nationalism was also emphasised by Cohen (1996). He argues that it would be a mistake to ignore the personal dimension of nationalism: similar to Fox and Miller-Idriss' argument that people are not only consumers of national meanings but also active producers of these meanings (2008: 546), Cohen argues that as individuals, we watch national rites and "we remake them in the sense that *we* are able to make of them" (1996: 807). Cohen's argument is crucial in pointing out the necessity of studying the readings of national meanings by individuals. Regardless of the nature of different regimes, these 'personal nationalisms' that are constructed by individuals for themselves are crucial in expressing individualised forms of nationalisms. Based on this concept of 'personal nationalism', this thesis develops the idea that forms of 'Kurdishness' are customised in accordance with everyday interactions and personal experiences.

The literature on everyday ethnicity and nationhood, then, provides the necessary framework to understand how ethnicities are constructed through everyday activities of individuals. Within this framework, individuals are being active producers of ethnicities instead of ethnicities being shaped by structural forces. It is also useful to understand how boundaries are (re-)made on a daily basis through interactions amongst ordinary people.

The second part of this chapter will discuss the literature on boundary-making approach towards ethnicities. The first part of the discussion focuses on the theoretical evolution within the literature that started with the concept of assimilation to evolve into the discussions on boundary-making approach. I will first discuss how the earlier assumptions within the assimilation literature have now been replaced by discussions on boundary making and "boundary-work" (Gieryn 1983). I will, then, discuss how the literature on boundaries should be read in order to make sense of the empirical data that will be presented in the following chapters. Similar to Brubaker's idea that it is now time to discuss *how* ethnicities are constructed instead of simply asserting that they *are* (2002: 175), Wimmer also argues that the idea that ethnicity is

constructed, contextually variable, contested and contingently eventful, the four Cs of the constructivist framework have been a routine argument in the social sciences recently (Wimmer 2013: 204). The important task is to explore which contextual variables have an influence on the construction of ethnicities and through which means these ethnicities are constructed. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will focus on these influences on 'Kurdishness'. The rest of this chapter will discuss the necessary framework to understand these questions: How does boundary theory explain the contextuality of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey? The salience of membership in the ethnic category (Brubaker 2009: 27) of 'Kurdishness' can be understood through the literature on boundary-making of ethnicities that suggests variability across contexts in terms of membership.

1.2. From Assimilation to Boundary-Making

The concept of assimilation, as a sociological phenomenon to be analysed, firstly emerged in the early 20th century within the Chicago School of Sociology. University of Chicago provided the perfect background to study assimilation for the sociologists there due to the city's demographic structure as Chicago was then "a city growing by leaps and bounds as a result of massive migrations and industrial growth" (Alba and Nee 2003: 19). Even though there have been discussions on what exactly assimilation is and that there has been "not much concern for any preciseness of definition" (McKee 1993: 122), it is possible to find standard definitions of assimilation in the earlier periods of assimilation studies. As early as 1921, Robert E. Park and E. W. Burgess, two of the pioneers on the assimilation studies, defined assimilation as follows:

> […] is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life (1921: 735).

A classical tradition on the study of assimilation emerged amongst the scholars of sociology, also referred to as *the canonical tradition of assimilation* (Alba and Nee 2003; Kivisto 2005). To understand the immigration and the interaction of different

ethnic groups within the American state, the canonical paradigm of assimilation was used as the major theory until the re-visiting of the concept of assimilation in the 1980s.

What were some of the characteristics of this old conception of assimilation? The very earliest accounts on assimilation (Mayo-Smith 1894; Park 1914; Simons 1901-1902) "rejected the view that assimilation was a theoretical expression of the melting pot" (Kivisto 2005: 9). The idea of 'melting pot' has been consistently discussed to describe the American context with regards to the assimilation of different ethnic groups. The Pot has been taken as "something for granted", as a metaphor serving to "answer the challenges of social justice and diversity posed by immigration" (Rumbaut 2005). Those scholars also emphasised the role of culture over biology and hence, breaking away from biological determinism (Kivisto 2005: 10).

The most important common characteristic; however, of the earlier formulations of assimilation is the ethno-centric ideology that was inherent within these theories. This ethno-centrist approach "elevated a particular cultural model, that of middle-class Protestant whites of British ancestry, to the normative standard by which other groups are to be assessed and toward which they should aspire" (Alba and Nee 2003: 4). All the ethnic groups within the American context, in this theoretical framework, are seen to be inevitably assimilated into this 'White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant' (WASP) culture. Park (1914) discussed this with regards to the context of slavery and saw African-Americans assimilating into the culture of the Anglo-Saxon race:

> The most striking illustration of this is the fact of domestic slavery. Slavery has been, historically, the usual method by which peoples have been incorporated into alien groups. When a member of an alien race is adopted into the family as a servant, or as a slave, and particularly when that status is made hereditary, as it was in the case of the Negro after his importation to America, assimilation followed rapidly and as a matter of course (1914: 612).

Warner and Srole (1945) took this ethno-centric idea one step further by making a scale of subordination and assimilation. This scale was based on physical, religious and linguistic differences and presented "the differences between the dominant white American host society and the present ethnic and racial groups as well as entering immigrant groups" (1945: 50). The classical assimilation formulations, based on these ethno-centric ideas, thus viewed assimilation as something 'inevitable' that the

ethnic groups within the state were eventually destined to go through. The assumption inherent in this idea was that not only assimilation was inevitable but it was also 'beneficial' for the ethnic groups within the American society to "bring an end to prejudice and discrimination and a liberation from the constricting bonds of parochial group loyalties" (Alba and Nee 2005: 15-16). This idea of ethno-centrism that takes the WASP-dominant approach is also observed in the theory of assimilation of Milton Gordon (1964).

Milton Gordon's theory of assimilation offers a "multidimensional concept" of assimilation (Alba and Nee 2003: 23). One of the most important contributions of this theory to the literature on assimilation has been its use of stages to explore assimilation. Instead of seeing assimilation as a single abstract concept, Gordon argued that there have been different, 7 to be exact, aspects of assimilation. After his preliminary discussion on various definitions of 'acculturation' and 'assimilation', Gordon continues his discussion with his hypothetical case of 'Sylvania' and 'Mundovians', the immigrants to the state of Sylvania. Mundovians are different than Sylvanians in terms of national background, religion and other cultural patterns. For Gordon, there are seven different sub-processes in which Mundovians are assimilated into the culture and society of the Sylvanian state.

a) Mundovians might "change their cultural patterns (including religious belief and observance) to those of the Sylvanians" (*acculturation*).
b) They might have "entered fully into the societal network of groups and institutions, or societal structure, of the Sylvanians" (*structural assimilation*).
c) They might have "intermarried and interbred fully with the Sylvanians" (*marital assimilation* or *amalgamation*).
d) They might have "developed a Sylvanian, in place of a Mundovian, sense of peoplehood, or ethnicity" (*identificational assimilation*).
e) They might have "reached a point where they encounter no discriminatory behavior" (*behaviour receptional assimilation*).
f) They might have "reached a point where they encounter no prejudiced attitudes" (*attitude receptional assimilation*).
g) They "do not raise by their demands concerning the nature of Sylvanian public or civic life any issues involving value and power conflict with the original Sylvanians" (*civic assimilation*) (1964: 70).

This approach sees assimilation as "a matter of degree" (1964: 71), which is different than the classical assimilation theories that saw assimilation as a total disappearance

of the distinguishing features of ethnic groups. A person could go through the first stage of assimilation, acculturation, and then not assimilate into the 'Sylvanian' state any further. Gordon raises this point in his further analysis: Acculturation, for him, is likely to be the first of the stages of assimilation to go through for a minority or for an ethnic group. There is also an 'acculturation-only' condition that might be observed: this happens when acculturation happens even when none of the other types of assimilation occurs simultaneously or later (1964: 71). This condition of 'acculturation-only', for Gordon, has been the dominant position in the history of assimilation within the American context. The process of acculturation throughout the history of immigration to America has been "overwhelmingly triumphant" (1964: 107). This has been achieved through 'Anglo-conformity', which meant "the desirability of maintaining English institutions, the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life" (1964: 88).[19]

These classical assimilation models; however, came under attack partly due to the changing nature of the American society during the 1970s (especially with the civil rights movement and Vietnam War) (Kivisto 2005: 15) and partly because the shortcomings of these theories were observed more clearly. In her attempt to 'resuscitate' the classical assimilation model, Morawska states that the classical assimilation theory was "too simplistic and too ahistorical" (1994: 76). Glazer (1993) stated that the word itself might be 'dead' but the reality of assimilation was still very much alive. The fact that the American life has failed to incorporate 'the Negro', according to Glazer, should not take away from the reality that "assimilation continues to flourish" (1993: 125). Since the classical assimilation model took the ethno-centric approach, it is not surprising that it was assumed that assimilation was a one-way process, through which the dominant group is not mainly affected. One of the criticisms that the scholars re-visiting assimilation raised, then, concerns this point (Alba and Nee 2003; Barkan 1995). Barkan (1995) defines assimilation as a "bidirectional phenomenon in that the general society and culture are affected by the heritages who assimilate" (1995: 49). Even though he admits the amount of influence

[19] As Anglo-conformity has been the dominant norm throughout the history of assimilation in the United States, the argument of a 'melting pot', for Gordon, has been seen as an alternative paradigm. The idea of a single melting pot, according to Gordon, has proved to be something of an illusion. He suggests describing the American society as a 'multiple melting pot', which contains structurally separate pots, each of them with its own network groups, organisations, and institutions (1964: 131).

of both groups might be disproportionate, it is certainly not a one-way process from host/dominant society to the members of ethnic groups, as the earlier formulations of assimilation suggest (1995: 49).

Within the Turkish context, the dominant framework when it comes to its ethnic groups has been that the leaders of the Turkish nation-state building had a homogeneous nation in their mind that consisted of only Turkish elements and for this purpose, they denied the existence of all the non-Turkish ethnic groups (Heper 2007: 5). In Gellnerian terms, establishing a Turkish 'high culture' was the main goal for the founders of the Turkish state and anything belonging to the 'low cultures' had to be abolished in order to reach this goal. Scholars defending this point of view (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Entessar 1992; Kramer 2000; Robins 1993) argue that it is the government that tried to forcefully assimilate the Kurds and the following ethnic conflict between the militants and the Turkish state is the result of these policies. The goal of total disappearance of the non-Turkish elements within the society bears resemblance to the classical assimilation theories. The ethno-centric element within the classical assimilation theories is also inherent here in the sense that Turkish culture was seen as the culture into which all the non-Turkish elements, especially the Kurdish ones, had to be assimilated.

However, an alternative point of view has emerged in recent years with regards to the assimilation of Kurds within the Turkish state. This paradigm distinguishes between 'denial' and 'non-recognition' of an ethnic identity: The assimilationist point of view argues that the Turkish state has been in denial of the Kurdish identity, whereas 'the acculturation paradigm' states that the Turkish state chooses not to recognise the Kurdish identity. That is, it hopes that "that identity would not become the primary ethnic identity of the Kurds and that it remains as their secondary identity" (Heper 2007: 6). This view also suggests that what has happened to Kurds within the Turkish state is not the forceful assimilation of the state but it has been a process of acculturation (Heper 2007).[20] According to this paradigm, the policies of the Turkish state have not been aimed at assimilating the Kurdish peoples, but they are attempts at preventing "the de-acculturation of the already acculturated" (Heper 2007: 7). That

[20] Heper defines acculturation in this context as "steady disappearance of cultural distinctiveness as a consequence of a process of *voluntary*, or rather *unconscious*, assimilation" (2007: 6).

is, this recent paradigm explains that centuries-old living together of Turks and Kurds resulted in these two peoples sharing more than what they differ. Therefore, this paradigm continues, what the state does could not be assimilation of Kurds as differences between Turks and Kurds have diminished due to living together for centuries. What it does instead is to prevent a 'de-acculturation process' from taking place so that Kurds "would not again begin to think and act only in terms of their secondary ethnic identity" (Heper 2007: 11). This paradigm; therefore, argues that the roots of the conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state are not to be found in the policies of the state, as the assimilation paradigm defended. The 'troubles' had started, according to this point of view, when Kurds, for one reason or another, "but not for ethnic reasons, became dissatisfied with the pattern of relations they have had with the state" (Heper 2007: 11).

The idea that there is a constant interaction amongst ethnic groups instead of focusing on a one-way interaction through which only one ethnic group is affected can be traced back to the 1960s. Barth (1969), one of the pioneers of boundary-making approach between ethnic groups, discusses the boundaries of ethnic groups by emphasising the notion of *ascription*. Self-ascription and ascription by others are the two critical features of ethnic groups, whose members use them to categorise themselves and others. This emphasis on ascription, according to Barth, is what provides the continuity of ethnic groups. Even though people, or the members of certain ethnic categories, might be flowing across boundaries, the very existence of these boundaries continues. The features and the criteria that define the boundaries may change, yet the maintenance of boundaries remains constant and this is provided by the constant dichotomisation (1969: 14). The important feature of Barth's argument is that the membership to ethnic groups is subjective, rather than relying on any objective criterion:

> It makes no difference how dissimilar members may be in their overt behaviour – if they say they are A, in contrast to another cognate category B, they are willing to be treated and let their own behaviour be interpreted and judged as A's and not as B's (1969: 15).

The aspect of ascription puts the emphasis on agency of the individuals instead of the determinist ideas. In line with this focus on agency, the literature on boundaries

between groups has also focused on the 'making' and the 're-making' of the boundaries. Barth's work was ground-breaking in the sense that it introduced the idea that maintaining the boundaries between ethnic groups could be achieved regardless of the cultural differences between them. In contrast to classical assimilation theories that defended the idea that different ethnic groups and nations have different cultural markers, Barth, around the same time, suggested that this is not necessarily the case. Barth's work mostly focuses; however, on the processes of how boundaries are maintained, whereas recently, the focus of boundary literature has shifted towards making of these boundaries (Wimmer 2013: 45).

In line with this shifting focus within the literature, Zolberg and Woon (1999) formulated three patterns of boundary-making in their study of immigration to Europe and to the United States: boundary crossing, boundary blurring, and boundary shifting. *Boundary crossing* refers to the process individuals go through "by acquiring some of the attributes of the host society" such as acquiring the mother language of the host society (1999: 8). *Boundary blurring* is the term that is more concerned with the host society: it refers to blurring of the differences between host society and immigrants that were once seen as "'alien' differences" (1999: 9) through the host society becoming more tolerant of those differences. *Boundary shifting* refers to the more comprehensive process, whereby the boundaries between immigrants and host society are redrawn either in the process of exclusion or inclusion (1999: 9).

Building on these concepts of boundary making, Alba and Nee (2003) formulated a new conception of assimilation that is "neither normative nor prescriptive" (2003: 15). They, again, emphasised the bi-dimensionality of assimilation as Barkan (1995) did and argued that assimilation may occur "through changes taking place in groups on both sides of the boundary" (2003: 11). Their conceptualisation of assimilation also involves recognition of the ethnicity as a 'social boundary'. For them, social and cultural differences between groups give boundaries to the groups so that members of ethnic groups would think, '*they* are not like *us* because…' (italics added for emphasis, 2003: 11). The creation of ethnic boundaries that help individuals to distinguish themselves from others is a daily distinction that individuals make and that "shapes their actions and mental orientations toward others" (2003: 11). The

classical assimilation theories, Alba and Nee argue, also could be related to the primordialist approaches on ethnicity. They argue that the inevitability of assimilation and the ultimate dying out of all the distinguishers of ethnic groups in classical assimilation theories is consistent with the idea of ethnicity as a 'primordial bond' that is doomed to weaken as a result of the rational individualism. Their aim in reformulating the assimilation theory, they argue, is "to free the concept of assimilation from this unnecessary baggage" (2003: 16). Ultimately, their definition of assimilation is "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences" (2003: 11). The word 'decline' here implies that assimilation does not have to mean total disappearance of distinguishers of ethnicity and an individual going through assimilation might still carry his or her ethnic features, be it cultural or social. This way, assimilation is seen as something more flexible instead of an 'either-or' category, which the classical assimilation theories argued for. Alba and Nee's revised assimilation theory could be considered one of the frameworks that bridge the classical assimilation theories and most recent boundary theories (discussed shortly) through a boundary-focused conceptual framework. They argue that assimilation is still a vital concept that "has not lost its utility for illuminating many of the experiences of contemporary immigrants and the new second generation" (2003: 9), yet they adapt this concept to the changing dynamics of societies resulting from contemporary immigration.

More recently, the discussions on boundaries have been widely organised around different concepts such as identity. Brubaker and Cooper (2000), in their discussion of identity, argue that identity is not an indispensable concept for social sciences. It is a "heavily burdened, deeply ambiguous term" (2000: 8) and it could be replaced by alternative terms such as 'identification', 'self-understanding', and 'connectedness' (2000: 14-21). They discuss that the term 'identification' carries an "active" and "processual" meaning, which "invites us to specify the agents that do the identifying" (2000: 14). Similar to Barth's concept of "self-ascription" (1969), identification could also be done by oneself, which Brubaker and Cooper term as "self-identification" (2000: 15). This concept of identification with an active meaning will be illustrated in Chapter 5 through the narratives of the respondents.

Another aspect of Brubaker and Cooper's argument is that they introduce the concepts of 'strong' and 'weak' or 'soft' identities. Strong conceptions of identity, according to Brubaker and Cooper, put their emphasis on "sameness over time or across persons", while weak or soft conceptions of identity are more associated with the terms such as 'multiple', 'unstable', 'in flux', 'contingent', 'fragmented', 'constructed' and 'negotiated' (2000: 10-11). Brubaker and Cooper present four different assumptions of strong conceptions of identity. It is here that the use of the term 'boundaries' is reinforced. One of their different assumptions states that strong identities imply "high degrees of groupness, an 'identity' or sameness among group members, a sharp distinctiveness from nonmembers, a clear boundary between inside and outside" (2000: 10). This 'sameness', as mentioned earlier, could be across persons (within a group) or over time. Similar to Barth's argument, identities persist over time or across persons despite the interaction across boundaries. The weak or soft conceptions of identity suggests a more constructed[21] idea regarding identity. In the case of this research, it is possible to observe both the 'strong' and the 'soft' conceptions of identity. More than the 'group homogeneity' that was mentioned with regards to the strong conception of identity,[22] the features of 'sharp distinctiveness from nonmembers' and 'clear boundaries between inside and outside' will be emphasised with regards to everyday interactions of the respondents. As will be empirically shown in the next chapters, the 'strength' of their identity is reflected in the language they use when describing *them* and *others*. It is not the intention of this research to offer alternative uses for the term 'identity' as Brubaker and Cooper did, hence I will refrain from discussing whether the term 'identity' should be replaced. Yet, the 'soft' conception of identity is also useful to recognize the fluidity and the flexibility in the case of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey. The 'softness', in this case, is reflected in the contextuality of 'Kurdishness' and in the fact that its manifestations differ depending on contextual variables.

[21] In fact, Brubaker and Cooper call this 'cliched constructivism'. Those qualifiers such as 'constructed', 'negotiated', 'unstable', and so on, according to them, "risk becoming mere place-holders, gestures signalling a stance rather than words conveying a meaning" (2000: 11). This criticism even leads Brubaker and Cooper to question whether the 'weak' or 'soft' conceptions of identity really study *identity*. According to them, it is clear to see why they are called *weak* conceptions of identity but it is not so clear why they are conceptions of *identity* in the first place, hence the need to go beyond 'identity', as the title of their article suggests (2000: 19).

[22] Saying anything about the homogeneity of Turkish Kurds is beyond the scope and the intentions of this research.

Brubaker develops this idea of 'groupness' further in his later work. In his discussion on ethnicity, he proposes to think of ethnicity (and also 'race' and 'nations') as "relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms" instead of substances or entities or collective individuals (2002: 167). By doing this, we can talk about "ethnicization" as a process and "groupness" as an event, "as something that 'happens'" instead of something that is "fixed and given" (2002: 167-168). In fact, Brubaker argues that even the very metaphor of boundaries that Barth introduced, with its focus on bounded groups, "can impede a more fully dynamic and processual understanding of ethnicity" (2009: 29). This kind of an approach; however, also carries the risk of being a "radical constructivist" (Wimmer 2013: 25) and treating ethnicities as mere 'imagined communities' (Wimmer 2013: 26). Wimmer suggests we should be cautious against radical constructivism that would take situational and contextual variability of ethnicities for granted and offers a comprehensive analysis of "how and why ethnicity matters in certain societies and contexts but not in others" (2013: 2). This research, drawing on this argument, suggests to take 'Kurdishness' as a continuous category whilst, at the same time, recognising its varieties and the different forms it can take.

Thinking of 'groupness' instead of 'groups' helps us understand exactly this: how individuals could (re-) negotiate their ethnicities depending on the context whilst, at the same time, maintaining the boundaries of their identities. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, an individual can still exhibit forms of 'Kurdishness' despite being repeatedly called as 'half-Kurd' by others due to her inability to speak Kurdish language. Wimmer (2013) reinforces this argument in his work by stating that boundaries "do not imply closure and clarity, which vary in degree from one society, social situation, or institutional context to another" (2013: 10). Loveman and Muniz (2007) illustrate this in their research on Puerto Rico where they looked at the categorisation of individuals by looking at census data from 1910 and from 1920. Their data show significant differences in the way Puerto Ricans are classified in two censuses: It shows that Puerto Rico has become significantly whiter in terms of classification. That is, a significantly greater amount of individuals from mixed background have been classified as 'white' in 1920 compared to in 1910. This suggests a "primary shift in the social definition of whiteness itself" (Loveman and

Muniz 2007: 935), which illustrates the concept of 'boundary shifting' mentioned earlier. Similarly, Schwartzman's (2007) work on Brazilian non-white parents illustrates how boundary-crossing works across generations through socio-economic status: more educated non-white parents are more likely to classify their children as 'white' than less educated non-white parents are.

This research, drawing on these concepts, will look at the contextual variables having a significant influence on different manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss how state rhetoric plays a role in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey. Chapter 5 will discuss how regions and encounters of discrimination and of prejudice play a role in the shaping of different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Chapter 6 will discuss two of the other 'bottom-up' variables: family environment and neighbourhood. These chapters will show that 'Kurdishness' is simply manifested in different forms in different contexts instead of individuals being 'Kurdish' or 'not Kurdish'.

1.3. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the theoretical frameworks this research makes use of. It was divided into two parts: The first part of the chapter discussed theories of ethnicity and nationalism and it argued for a two-dimensional approach to understanding ethnicity: Instead of only studying state-led forces on ethnicity or ethnicity "from below" (Hobsbawm 1990: 10), this chapter suggests a framework that requires to look at both state-led and bottom-up factors on ethnicity. Only then, this chapter argues, could we have a more thorough understanding on ethnicity construction.

To understand 'state-led' influences on manifestations of 'Kurdishness', Gellner's theory of modernisation was discussed. Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis will explore how state rhetoric influences the ways 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey. Gellner's emphasis on the importance of a standardised language within industrial societies and on the establishment of a 'high culture' provides an explanation for the discussions in Chapters 3 and 4: Focusing on the policies of the leaders of nation-

building during the early Republican period (1923-1938), Chapter 3 discusses how to become 'ideal Turks' in the eyes of the Republican leaders and how this plays a role in the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. Chapter 4 will discuss the continuities and the changes within this state rhetoric during AKP period that started in 2002. Gellner's theory of modernisation discussed in this chapter is useful to understand the relationship between the state rhetoric and 'Kurdishness'. More specifically, it provides a framework through which the meaning of the state rhetoric could be understood. This way, Gellnerian theory of modernisation will be referenced in this research by adding the element of state actions. In other words, this research will make use of the Gellner's theory of modernisation and his concept of 'high culture' by adding agency to it through the actions of state leaders. However, to unpack how 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey also requires to look at interactions amongst ordinary people. The literature on everyday nationhood/ethnicity provides one of the frameworks through which one can understand how this could be achieved. Chapters 5 and 6 will illustrate these discussions by looking at every day interactions amongst 'ordinary people'.

The second part of this chapter focused on the literature on boundary-making approach and how the discussion on boundary shaping is useful for the purposes of this research. In line with the recent literature on boundary-making approach that has distanced itself from the earlier assimilationist literature that takes ethnic groups as characterised by closed social networks, this research makes use of the dynamic understanding of boundary-making approach on ethnicities. The following chapter focuses on the discussion of the methods that were used to study 'Kurdishness' both "from below" (Hobsbawm 1990: 10) and from 'top-down'.

2. RESEARCHING DIFFERENT FACTORS IN MANIFESTATIONS OF 'KURDISHNESS': A "TRIANGULATION" OF METHODS

As discussed in the Introduction, this research explores the different forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested by individuals. Yet researching 'Kurdishness' presents a challenge: how could an abstract concept such as 'Kurdishness' be measured? This chapter will focus on the research methods that were used in data collection, and problems that had to be overcome in the process. Starting with a detailed explanation of the research questions that were outlined in the Introduction, I will then review the methods used to collect data for this research to answer those research questions.

2.1. Research Questions

The idea for this research was inspired by Gellner's (1983) concept of "high culture". Gellner's theory of modernisation states that modernisation necessitates the existence of one homogeneous culture into which different ethnic groups are assimilated. How is it, then, that 'Kurdishness' in a nation-state with a Turkish "high culture" is exhibited by individuals? As discussed in Chapter 1, one of the theoretical frameworks this research is based on is boundary theory. Drawing on the arguments within the boundary theory literature, this research explores the contextual variability of 'Kurdishness'. Then, the sub-questions of this research are related to studying these different contextual variables that have an influence on manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. These sub-questions also guided the process of data collection and the methodologies that were used.

a) *What role does state rhetoric play on the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'?* Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss the relationship between state rhetoric and manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. What this question is interested in is *not* how 'Kurdishness' is led by the Kurdish elites; rather, I am more interested in the impact of state rhetoric on 'Kurdishness' and in its manifestations. This question emerged as a result of an "intellectual curiosity" (Lofland, et al.

2006: 12) during the Peace Process between the government and the PKK,[23] which included talks of reforms. During my fieldwork, the then-ongoing Peace Process was one of the most contested issues amongst respondents. The ceasefire between the government and the PKK, along with other developments throughout the AKP period,[24] meant some significant changes emerged in the state rhetoric from earlier periods. The grounded theory approach that I applied, which will be discussed shortly, provided the flexibility that was necessary to adjust research questions according to what the data suggested. The instant reactions to the then-ongoing Peace Process and how they are reflected in manifestations of 'Kurdishness' suggested that this research should also take into account state rhetoric when studying 'Kurdishness'. For this purpose, the state rhetoric from two periods are compared in Chapters 3 and 4: the early Republican period (1923-1938) and the AKP period (from 2002 onwards). These two periods presented two different 'moments of transition' in the history of the Turkish state: the early Republican period saw the transition of a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and a multilingual Empire into a monocultural, secular, and monolingual nation-state, whereas the AKP period saw the transition of this secular nation-state into one with an Islamic multiculturalist vision.

b) *What role does the Kurdish language play on the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'?* This question aims to unpack the relationship between being fluent in the Kurdish language and how 'Kurdishness' is manifested by that individual. The discussion on the relationship between language and nationalism is nothing new and has mostly been dominated by two camps: essentialists and instrumentalists. The essentialist camp of linguistic nationalism argues that language is the heart and the soul of a people. This approach was pioneered by the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder in the 18th century. He wrote that "…with language is created the heart of a

[23] PKK was established in Ankara in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan. The party's initial aim was to establish an independent, united Kurdistan, and the members of the party saw "the armed struggle as the only way to achieve this" (van Bruinessen 1984: 233). For a detailed account on the transformation of PKK's vision, see Al (2015a).
[24] Chapter 4 will discuss the rhetoric of the AKP in detail.

people" (quoted in Fishman 1975: 1). Fishman, influenced by Herderian philosophy, also stated that language, more than any of the other elements, is the life of a nation: "the mother tongue is itself an aspect of the soul, a part of the soul, if not the soul made manifest" (1975: 46). Associated with the primordialist approach, the essentialists "emphasize language as an object of affect" (Hearn 2006: 210). The instrumentalist camp, on the other hand, argues that instead of being the heart and soul of a nation, language is a mere instrument that is used during the process of nation-state building (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Deutsch 1953). If the Kurdish language,[25] in line with the discussions on linguistic nationalism, is (or is not) the heart of the Kurdish nation, then does being a native speaker of Kurdish have an impact on manifesting 'Kurdishness'? This question is also related to the aforementioned research question in the sense that the public use of the Kurdish language differs across the regions. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the field sites in Southeast Turkey reveal more instances of the use of the Kurdish language in public spaces than Western Turkey. How do these differences play a role in manifestations of 'Kurdishness'? This question also explores the case of non-native speakers of Kurdish: how is being a non-native speaker of Kurdish reflected in their forms of 'Kurdishness'? How does the Kurdish language shape boundaries of 'Kurdishness' in the case of non-native speakers? As will be discussed in the following sections, data were collected from both native- and non-native speakers to explore this question.

c) *What can regional comparison tell us about dimensions and manifestations of 'Kurdishness'?* One of the questions of interest was to explore whether the region an individual is based in has a significant impact on how he or she experiences 'Kurdishness'. That is, how does an individual based in Southeast Turkey manifest his or her form of 'Kurdishness' compared to an individual based in Western Turkey? The discussion in Chapter 5 explores

[25] Kurds across the different states do not have a uniform language and the language they speak shows variances even within Turkey. Therefore, throughout this thesis, the phrase 'the Kurdish language' will refer to the specific dialect the individuals speak, instead of referring to a certain dialect of Kurdish.

this question. Sarigil and Fazlioglu's study shows that "the Kurds from Southeast Turkey are more likely to have an ethno-nationalist orientation compared to Kurds living in other regions" (Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014: 446). Key policies during the Kemalist period, such as the Resettlement Law (Chapter 3), were based on the idea that if Kurds from Southeast Turkey would be relocated, they would eventually be converted into 'the ideal Turks'. The government, after the Kemalist period officially ended, also implemented policies aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the Southeast region (Aydınlı 2002; Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014; Yegen 2011), which returned focus to the regional element. Named as a "socio-economic approach" (Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014), the policy to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Southeast region also assumes that Kurds based in that region are more likely to show ethnic orientation than Kurds in other regions due to the economic underdevelopment in that region. This implies that if socio-economic conditions improve in the Southeast region, then the ethnic orientations of individuals living there would be constrained just like individuals living in the other regions. This research aims to unpack this relationship between regions and 'Kurdishness' further by collecting data from two different parts of Turkey, the details of which will be discussed later in this chapter. Before moving to the next question, it is essential to point out the meaning of the term 'region' throughout this thesis. The term 'region' throughout this research will be used as proxy for the different field sites in which this research was conducted. Research data was collected from five different field sites in Turkey: Diyarbakır, Mardin, Derik, Istanbul, Ayvalık. Turkey is divided into seven geographic regions[26]: Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Derik are located in the Southeast Anatolia region, whereas Istanbul is in the Marmara region and Ayvalık is in the Aegean region. Throughout this research, however, I will refer to Istanbul and Ayvalık as the Western part of Turkey, and to Diyarbakır, Derik and Mardin as the Southeast part. It needs to be emphasised that the aim here, while categorising the field sites as two

[26] It is necessary to make clear that this division is not used for administrative purposes. Turkey, since the establishment of the Republic in 1923, has always been a unitary state with a strong central government and without any self-governing units, as will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The naming of these regions is merely for geographical purposes.

different parts, is not to treat the field sites within each category as homogeneous. As Chapter 6 will discuss, the neighbourhoods within the different towns are one of the contextual factors that influence the forms 'Kurdishness' takes. Each of these five field sites have different demographic characteristics.

2.2. Research Design

The collection of the qualitative data that this research relies on is based on a "triangulation" (Denzin 1978; Webb, et al. 1966) of methods. I use 'triangulation' as it was originally defined by Denzin as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (1978: 291). These different methodologies I used to study 'Kurdishness' in Turkey were: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document research. The use of these different methods helped me, as the researcher, capture the different aspects of manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. These methods will be reviewed in detail shortly. Firstly, however, it is necessary to explain the timeline of the data collection and the choices of the field sites.

2.2.1. Timeline and Grounded Theory Approach

The timeline for data collection consisted of two stages. The first stage started in January 2013 and lasted until 15 May 2013. The second stage was in June 2014. To understand why this was necessary, I will briefly discuss the concept of grounded theory.

Grounded theory, firstly developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), usually refers to the "approach to the generation of theory out of data" (Bryman 2008: 541). Even though the definition of grounded theory is not agreed upon within the literature, one of the crucial aspects of it is the interrelatedness of data collection and analysis (Corbin and Strauss 1990: 6). That is, the data collection and the analysis "proceed in tandem" (Bryman 2008: 541). In this approach, the process itself guides the researcher and leads her to the next interviews and to the next observations.

This aspect of the grounded theory is what led me to conduct the second phase of data collection in June 2014. After an analysis of the data through coding, what usually happens is that some concepts and categories emerge by "repeatedly being present in interviews, documents, and observations in one form or another" (Corbin and Strauss 1990: 7). In this research, the data collection, led through the initial analysis, was followed by more analysis and an "initial hunch" (Bryman 2008: 544) emerged about the concepts that came through the data. To collect more data on this hunch, additional data were collected in June 2014. On 21 March 2013, a Peace Process was officially declared between the government and the PKK. This meant that my stay in Southeast Turkey, where I arrived three weeks after the start of the Peace Process, was during the initial stage of this declaration. The reactions to the Peace Process constituted a great deal of the concepts and categories that emerged during the initial stages of data collection. This, in turn, led to an "intellectual curiosity" (Lofland, et al. 2006: 12) on the relationship between state rhetoric and how 'Kurdishness' is manifested by individuals. Hence, I went back to the field one year later (June 2014) to observe the reactions one year into the Process. At that time, the Process was officially still going on. Even though the final analysis does not mainly focus on the Peace Process itself, the reactions towards this Process were useful to observe the current ways through which 'Kurdishness' is manifested.

I first went to Turkey in January 2013, during which I searched for my initial contacts and went back and forth between Istanbul and Ayvalık.[27] I contacted my first respondent (Mahsun) for an interview in Istanbul through a contact who, like Mahsun, works as a journalist, and thus officially started collecting data in February 2013. During the months of February and March 2013, I continued with my interviews by going back and forth between Istanbul and Ayvalık. This continued until mid-April, when I went to Southeast Turkey to explore how 'Kurdishness' was experienced in regions predominated by Kurds (Research Question 'c'). I went to the Southeast part of Turkey on 12 April 2013 and stayed there until 15 May 2013. Overall, my data collection was based in five different field sites in two parts of Turkey, which is shown in Table 2.1.

[27] This was mainly for practical reasons as Ayvalık was the place where my family lived.

Western Turkey	Southeast Turkey
Istanbul	Mardin
Ayvalık	Diyarbakır
	Derik

Table 2.1. List of the field sites.

When I arrived in Southeast Turkey on 12 April 2013, I first stayed in Mardin. The host family I stayed with was introduced to me through a contact whom I knew in Ayvalık. In the house, there were a total of 6 residents: the husband and wife, their daughter, their son, their daughter-in-law, and their grandson. I stayed with them until the end of my stay in Mardin (25 April), and occasionally travelled to Diyarbakır when I interviewed people there. I did not stay in Diyarbakır as the proximity between Diyarbakır and Mardin[28] allowed me to do day trips from Mardin. I left Mardin on 25 April for Derik, where I stayed until 15 May 2013. During my stay in Derik, I occasionally made day-trips to Mardin and Diyarbakır to conduct interviews there.[29] I left Southeast Turkey on 15 May when I noticed that there was no new data emerging, or, in other words, that I reached "theoretical saturation" (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

The second stage of data collection took place the following year (June 2014) in Ayvalık to collect more data regarding Research Question 'a'. The reason why I went to Ayvalık instead of Southeast Turkey was that, in the first stage of data collection, I was in Southeast Turkey after the Peace Process declaration and did not collect data on this issue from the Western part of Turkey. To balance that, this time I went to the Western part of Turkey. Apart from the participant observation I conducted in some of these field sites, I conducted 33 semi-structured interviews overall. The next section will discuss how the field sites were selected.

[28] It takes almost one-and-a-half hours to travel between Mardin and Diyarbakır by mini shuttle buses.
[29] From Derik, it takes almost one hour to travel to Mardin and almost two hours to Diyarbakır by mini shuttle buses.

2.2.2. The Selection of Field Sites

The process of choosing five different field sites for this research depended on a combination of factors. It should be made clear, however, that I was not concerned that the field sites should be "'typical' or 'representative'" (Burgess 1984: 59). As the main question of this research is to unpack manifestations of 'Kurdishness', it does not claim to be a representative study of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey.

Not having to find a typical field site presenting 'Kurdishness', I started to look for contacts in January 2013. Through a contact who is a former academic but now works as a journalist, I contacted my first respondent, who is also a journalist living in Istanbul (Mahsun). Apart from having the largest population in Turkey, Istanbul is also home to Turkey's largest Kurdish population.[30] This made Istanbul one of the clear choices, and access to the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, as explained in the following section, was straightforward.

Sometimes, where fieldwork is done might be influenced by factors that are independent of the research itself. Even though the choice of the field sites does not entirely depend on external factors, having initial contacts at a certain setting or location might affect the path the fieldwork leads to (Burgess 1984). In my case, my familiarity with Istanbul and Ayvalık[31] helped me in the interview process. Ayvalık is a district of the province of Balıkesir with a population of 58,738[32] on the Western coast of Turkey. Due to my familiarity with the place, I was aware of the existence of a significant Kurdish population living there. Most are concentrated in a district called *Yenimahalle,* where some of my respondents from Ayvalık lived. This district and its impact on 'Kurdishness' will be discussed in Chapter 6.

As discussed when explaining the research questions, this research was interested in exploring the role that different parts of Turkey play in how individuals manifest 'Kurdishness'. To capture the diversity of the experiences of 'Kurdishness', I headed

[30] As mentioned in the Introduction, the censuses in Turkey do not reveal ethnic information of the citizens. However, a survey published by KONDA Research and Consultancy in 2006 shows the Kurdish population in Istanbul as 17-18% of its population. The 'Who Are We?' survey including the full information on the Kurdish population, can be downloaded at http://www.konda.com.tr/en/reports.php.

[31] My family and I lived in both of these places and my family still lives in Ayvalık.

[32] This is according to the census by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2000 (http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/Bolgesel/tabloOlustur.do) [Accessed 18 June 2015].

to Southeast Turkey after collecting data in the Western part of Turkey. The field sites within Southeast Turkey were determined through several factors, which will be discussed shortly. The characteristics of the places in Southeast Turkey also determined in which occasions to undertake participant observation and in which occasions to conduct semi-structured interviews.

Diyarbakır has long been considered a spiritual capital for Kurds. In fact, it has been declared the capital of Kurdistan by some leaders.[33] It has a population of 1,362,708,[34] so it has the characteristics of a big city. I did daily trips to Diyarbakır while I was staying in Mardin and in Derik. The respondents I interacted with and interviewed there were easy to access due to the contacts I had established in Ayvalık and in Istanbul. Mardin is slightly smaller than Diyarbakır in terms of population,[35] and its demographic characteristics are also slightly different. It is more multicultural in the sense that there is also a significant Arab and Assyrian population living there alongside Kurds and Turks. It is common to hear people speaking Arabic on the streets (field notes, 15 April 2013). The fact that it is located on the border with Syria has also changed the dynamics of the city recently as there has been an influx of Syrian immigrants into Mardin (field notes, 16 April 2013). In this sense, Mardin could be considered the Southeastern counterpart of Istanbul: multicultural, multilingual, and cosmopolitan. With one multicultural town from each part (Istanbul and Mardin), Diyarbakır and Ayvalık represented unique characteristics of their respective regions: Diyarbakır, as mentioned above, has been 'the spiritual capital of Kurds'; Ayvalık, on the other hand, has been dominated by the CHP.[36] In the last three local elections (2004, 2009, and 2014), the candidates for CHP were elected as

[33] See the statements of Osman Baydemir, the then-mayor of Diyarbakır, in 2012 (http://www.milliyet.com.tr/baydemir-turkiye-de-ozerk-kurdistan-olacak/siyaset/siyasetdetay/28.07.2012/1572884/default.htm), and Orhan Öztürk, the governor of Bitlis, in May 2015 (http://www.milliyet.com.tr/diyarbakir-kurdistan-in-baskenti--gundem-2054656/) [Accessed 19 June 2015].
[34] This is according to the census by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2000 (http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/Bolgesel/tabloOlustur.do) [Accessed 19 June 2015].
[35] Its population is 705,098 according to the 2000 census by the Turkish Statistical Institute (http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/Bolgesel/tabloOlustur.do) [Accessed 19 June 2015].
[36] CHP was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during the early years of the Republican period, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. In that sense, it is the party that is loyal to the Kemalist principles of the Turkish state.

the mayors.[37] The loyalty to the state could also be observed in the daily life of Ayvalık: every Friday and Sunday at 4:50 p.m., the national anthem is played through the speakers on the streets. This tradition, which started in 1955, results in some conflicts amongst the locals. Emir, one of the respondents who lives in Ayvalık, narrated a story of how he, with a couple of friends, once was outside when the anthem was being played and they continued with their businesses, whereas the others around them all stopped with what they were doing and stood up during the anthem. This caused an argument between Emir and the others and, since then, Emir said he has been careful of not being outside during the hours the anthem plays (field notes, 22 February 2013). As I was interested in the role that different regional characteristics play on the manifestation of 'Kurdishness', the contrast between these two cities (Diyarbakır and Ayvalık) presented a good case to explore this question. However, even though the contrast in the characteristics between these two field sites was satisfactory, the differences resulting from being a small town or a big city could not be eliminated. Therefore, I decided to look for a counterpart of Ayvalık in terms of size yet with the characteristics reflecting Southeast Turkey.

The opportunity arose when one of my contacts from Ayvalık, who is also one of the respondents (Emel), led me to some of the locals in Derik. Emel, currently living in Ayvalık, had worked as a teacher in Derik for one year and, hence, had established good relationships with the locals – so much so that she constantly refers to one of the families there as her "second family" (field notes, 29 April 2013). Derik is a district of Mardin and has a population of 55,278.[38] Going to Derik through someone that the locals know also helped me in gaining their trust and helped me develop a good relationship with the locals faster, which was crucial before undertaking participant observation. It also suited well the characteristics I was looking for: firstly, its population matched Ayvalık's, and that would mean there would be a similar-sized district from both parts of Turkey; secondly, due to its smaller size, the characteristics of the town could be observed more visibly, which provided ideal conditions to do participant observation.

[37] From 1994 until 2004, the mayor of Ayvalık belonged to the MHP. MHP was founded in 1969 and the party principles embrace Turkish nationalism.
[38] This is according to the census by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2000 (http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/Bolgesel/tabloOlustur.do) [Accessed 19 June 2015].

One last note should be added here about these different field sites. Istanbul and Ayvalık, as mentioned earlier, both have significant Kurdish populations. It would be impossible to ignore the impact of the internal migration within Turkey throughout decades on this population to emerge. Whether this migration is forced due to the armed conflict in Southeast Turkey since the 1990s (Sirkeci 2000: 159) or due to having more job opportunities in the Western part of Turkey (some respondents mentioned this in the interviews), the statistics show that the number of Kurds in western regions of Turkey has steadily increased (Mutlu 1996; Sirkeci 2000).[39] Specifically, Marmara and Aegean regions, where Istanbul and Ayvalık are located in respectively, have seen the biggest increase in terms of their Kurdish populations (Mutlu 1996: 532).

This is a useful reminder for the purposes of this research, especially as one of the research questions is interested in a regional comparison with regards to manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. Amongst the respondents, there were individuals who migrated to Western part of Turkey with their families and/or by themselves, as well as 'second-generation immigrants'.[40] In that sense, when making a regional comparison in this thesis, it would be a fallacy to ignore the fact that these two regions of Turkey are linked through migration. Even though the discussion in Chapter 5 on the regional comparison will deal with two different contexts that two different regions generate, the link between these two regions that has emerged through decades-long migration should also be kept in mind. Some of the by-products that migration to the Western part of Turkey brings will be acknowledged in Chapter 6, where the role that neighbourhoods play a role in manifestation of 'Kurdishness' will be discussed. Even within the same field site, the different neighbourhoods that the respondents reside generate different contexts for the respondents. *Yenimahalle*, the district of Ayvalık that will be focused on in Chapter 6, is the district that the Kurdish immigrants are usually concentrated in. Through these 'immigrant-neighbourhoods', internal migration that has continued for decades

[39] Mutlu shows that Istanbul and Izmir received the biggest number of Kurdish immigrants by 1990, with Istanbul's Kurdish population increasing from 2.77% in 1965 to 8.16% in 1990 and Izmir's Kurdish population increasing from 1.04% in 1965 to 6.91% in 1990 (1996: 526-527 and 539-540).
[40] There was even a 'third-generation immigrant' in the case of Arzu, whose grandparents escaped from Dersim during the events of 1937-38 (Chapter 3).

between these two parts of Turkey plays a role in interpreting the data of this research.

2.2.3. Methods of Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, the data collection was based on a 'triangulation of methods' (Denzin 1978). The reason for this was to explore the roles that regions, language and state rhetoric play on how 'Kurdishness' is manifested. For this reason, interviews were conducted, documents were analysed, and participant observation was conducted. The following sections will provide a detailed explanation of why these methods were used.

2.2.3.1. Interviews

Interviews were one of the main methods of data collection in this study. They were used to collect data both in the Western and Southeast parts of Turkey. The first interview was conducted in Istanbul on 20 February 2013, and the last interview was conducted in Ayvalık on 19 June 2014. Overall, 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The reason for doing interviews was to collect narratives of the respondents with regards to their experiences of 'Kurdishness'. Interviewing in qualitative research is useful to "hearing respondents' views 'in their own words'" (Byrne 2012: 209). As one of the questions I was interested in was the role that the Kurdish language plays on the respondents' exhibition of 'Kurdishness', I wanted to gather their stories from their early childhood, when they first started learning the language. Their first interactions with the world outside of their family environment (usually the primary school) and their current experiences when they speak their language could also be collected through interviewing the respondents. In that sense, sometimes the interviews took the form of "life history interviews" (Bryman 2008: 440) to understand "the inner experience of individuals, how *they* interpret, understand and define the world around them" (italics added for emphasis, Faraday and Plummer

1979: 776). In contrast to document research and participant observation, interviews provided the subjective voice the data needed, as the focus of life history interviews is "paramountly concerned with the subjective meanings of individuals" (Faraday and Plummer 1979: 776). As I was interested in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested and exhibited by individuals, interviews were useful in exploring the agency of this process.

The interviews I conducted consisted of one-to-one and group interviews. Group interviews were carried out due to convenience issues and at the request of the respondent. These group interviews were different from a focus group in the sense that I, as the researcher, was interested more in their individual experiences rather than their interactions with each other or their responses to certain issues "as members of a group" (Bryman 2008: 473). As the focus of this research was on individual experiences, I started the group interviews by asking individual questions to each respondent within the group. I reacted to each respondent individually and asked specific questions depending on the stories they narrated, instead of asking generic questions to everyone within the group. As the groups started discussing with each other, my role during the group interviews became more of a "facilitator" (Bryman 2008: 473) and I would try to intervene as little as possible and let the respondents to talk freely in order not to disrupt the dynamics within the group. All the respondents were informed of my research interest, which was 'experiences of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey'.[41]

Western Turkey: The interviews I conducted in Western Turkey were semi-structured. The main reason for this was that during the first phase of my data collection (February- 25 April 2013),[42] I did not formally engage in participant observation. That did not mean that I did not take notes if an incident that I thought was relevant for the purposes of my research occurred during the course of daily life, but, as opposed to the second phase of my data collection (25 April-15 May 2013 and June 2014), I was not actively engaged "in regular interaction with people and

[41] The actual Turkish phrase I used to the respondents was '*Türkiye'de Kürtlük nasıl tecrübe ediliyor?*', which is the question of how 'Kurdishness' is being experienced in Turkey. I put a passive voice in the research question instead of emphasising any agents since, during the initial stages of the research, I was careful not to lead the question in any specific direction.

[42] As mentioned in Section 2.2.1, 25 April is the day when I left for Derik to stay there until 15 May 2013.

participating in their daily lives" (Bryman 2008: 410). My data collection in the Western part of Turkey in February – April 2013 consisted of "one-visit interviews" (Gold 1958: 220-221) to the respondents. Therefore, to have guidance during these 'one-visits', semi-structured interviews were needed.

After I interviewed my first respondent in Istanbul on 20 February 2013 (Mahsun), whom I accessed through personal contacts,[43] I went to the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul [*İstanbul Kürt Enstitüsü* in Turkish; *Enstîtuya Kurdî ya Stenbolê* in Kurdish] to interview the staff working there. This institute was founded in 1992 and has produced many publications in the Kurdish language, including its regular journal *Zend*, which is published every three months (field notes, 1 March 2013). It also offers Kurdish language courses at each level. I made regular visits to this Institute to first make myself acquainted with the staff. I selected to interview the staff members who were native speakers of Kurdish instead of visitors who attended the Kurdish language courses. In Ayvalık, I interviewed locals who were introduced to me through personal contacts. During February and March of 2013, I travelled back and forth between Istanbul and Ayvalık to interview my respondents. In the third phase of my data collection (June 2014), my interviewees consisted of additional locals in Ayvalık, to whom, again, I was introduced through my personal contacts. In addition, in this phase, I also paid occasional visits to the Ayvalık branch of HDP[44] to conduct interviews and participant observation, which will be discussed in detail in the following section.

In the Western part of Turkey, during the first phase of data collection (February until mid-April 2013), what I took into account when choosing the respondents was them being native speakers of Kurdish language. This was due to the fact that I was interested in their experiences of 'Kurdishness' starting from the early years of their lives, when they first started school without being fluent in the Turkish language. In the last stage of data collection (June 2014), I interviewed people who were not fluent in Kurdish (i.e. individuals whose mother language was Turkish) to gain a more comprehensive picture of the role that language plays in how 'Kurdishness' is

[43] This contact was mentioned in both sections 2.2.1. as a former academic who now works as a journalist.
[44] HDP is a pro-Kurdish party that was established as a successor to BDP. As of today, after the general elections on 1 November 2015, the party has 59 seats in the National Assembly (out of 550).

exhibited. Thus, the selection of the respondents was partially similar to theoretical sampling, which is described as a "means whereby the analyst decides *on analytic grounds* what data to collect next and where to find them" (Strauss 1987: 38) since the research question on language, research question 'b', led me to interview people who spoke Kurdish from a very early age. Yet, the selection of the respondents also had the characteristics of "snowball sampling" (Bryman 2008; Taylor 1993) as I constantly asked the respondents to put me in contact with others who would be willing to share their experiences of 'Kurdishness'. I made use of this method in a slightly different way during the stage of participant observation, which will be discussed in the following section.

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I had an interview guide before the interviews started. However, it was also a "flexible" (Bryman 2008: 438) process and, occasionally, I picked up on things the respondents mentioned and asked them to elaborate further. As one of the questions this research wanted to explore was the relationship between language and 'Kurdishness', every interview started with the question of what their experiences were when they first started primary school when they did not know much Turkish. Then, I continued with their experiences during their later years: to the respondents who went through university education, I asked for their experiences during their undergraduate studies when they were more fluent in Turkish; for the respondents who did their compulsory military service, I asked them about their experiences during their service. This provided data on the experiences of the respondents in the occasions where they were fluent in Turkish compared to their earlier years. Lastly, I wanted to know about their current experiences. To collect data on this, I asked these questions: 'Do you perceive any negative/positive events towards you in the public space?' and 'How do you feel speaking Kurdish in the public space (if you do)?' However, as it was also a "flexible" process (Bryman 2008: 438), some points that the respondents raised were further explored. For instance, if the respondent mentioned he had children, I would ask him to elaborate on his family life and how the children are raised by him and his spouse. Or, if the respondent mentioned that he could not speak much Kurdish, the reasons for it were discussed. In all the interviews that took place after the declaration of the Peace Process, how the respondents perceived this on-going

development was also discussed. The questions about the Peace Process were 'how do you perceive the ongoing Peace Process?', 'how do you perceive the recent developments such as the establishment of *TRT 6*?',[45] and 'how do you perceive the constitutional definition of the 'Turkish nation''? Even though I was aware that the phrasing of these questions might have been leading in the sense that it asked for opinions of the respondents, they served the purpose of exploring the relationship between state rhetoric and how 'Kurdishness' is manifested in the narratives of the respondents.

Before all of my interviews, I informed the respondents that I was doing research on 'Kurdishness' in Turkey and asked their verbal consent. I also told them that their real names would not be revealed in any way and that I would use pseudonyms throughout the thesis. In total, I interviewed 12 respondents in Western Turkey. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed except one: even though I took every care to deal with unforeseen incidents, the tape-recorder broke down during one of the interviews in the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul. I continued taking notes for the rest of that interview so the data would not get lost.[46]

Southeast Turkey: I arrived in Mardin on 12 April and I stayed with a host family for two weeks in the centre of Mardin. Mardin and Diyarbakır, as described earlier, have the characteristics of 'big cities', whereas in Derik, I was immediately noticed as an 'outsider' by almost everybody (field notes, 30 April 2013). As I was engaged in participant observation in Derik, the "hanging out" approach (Geertz 1998) became a dominant method during my stay there, which will be discussed in detail in the following section. My interviews in Mardin and in Diyarbakır followed the approach I used in Western Turkey.

In Mardin, I first interviewed the people I was introduced to through my host family. I also went to the Mardin branch of the Education and Science Workers' Union [*Eğitim-Sen*] and to Artuklu University to interview the staff and the students there. In Diyarbakır, I, again, started with personal contacts I established through my host

[45] *TRT 6* is the first (and so far the only) state-funded TV channel that exclusively broadcasts in Kurdish. It was established in January 2009 during the second period of AKP rule (Chapter 4).
[46] This interview was the one of Muhammed, so the transcription of this interview is not verbatim but I tried to stay as close as possible to the original interview.

family. In addition, I went to the Human Rights Association [*İnsan Hakları Derneği*] and *Kurdî Der.*[47] The selection of respondents in Southeast Turkey was similar to that in Western Turkey in the sense that I interviewed people who have been in Kurdish-speaking environments since an early age regardless of the respondents' age and gender. What differed in Southeast Turkey in terms of the respondent selection happened in Derik due to my "continuous presence in the area" (Taylor 1993: 16). What happened was that, after a while, I did not continuously ask people to put me in touch with others who might be interested, as I did in Diyarbakır and Mardin, as it would happen naturally during the course of my interactions. That did not mean, however, I worked undercover. Due to the fact that almost everybody in Derik was aware of my presence as a researcher, they would interact with me willingly and I always carried my tape recorder with me in case an opportunity for an interview occurred during the course of everyday life. This approach of letting people talk to me instead of me going to them was also useful in order to prevent some of the 'taken-for-granted' perceptions. In total, I interviewed 21 respondents in Southeast Turkey. All of the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. All the interviews in Western and Southeast Turkey were conducted in Turkish due to my lack of fluency in Kurdish. This left me with the choices of relying on a translator or on conducting the interviews in Turkish, which was the second language for most of the respondents. The justification of my decision to conduct the interviews in Turkish and the implications of it will be discussed later in this chapter.

The interviews I conducted in Derik became more unstructured during the course of my stay. These were mostly in the forms of "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess 1984: 102). Even though I had the same guideline for my interviews when I arrived in Derik, the structure of the conversations shifted due to developing "the trust and confidence of those with whom interviews are used" (Burgess 1984: 103). When I first arrived in Derik, I walked around the town with a personal contact who had lived in the place earlier as a school teacher and who had gained the trust of the locals. On my first night there, I stayed in a local's house that my personal contact arranged to help make myself known to the locals. Afterwards, I stayed in a

[47] *Kurdî Der* is an association that was established in 2006 to protect and to flourish the Kurdish language (interview, 30 April 2013). They have many branches in various cities of Turkey.

guesthouse [*Öğretmenevi*] for a week, after which one of the locals who was working as a teacher told me that I could stay at her place for the rest of my stay, which suggests that I developed a trusting relationship with the locals there.

2.2.3.2. Participant Observation

I undertook participant observation both in Western and Southeast Turkey. The need to undertake participant observation emerged out of the selection bias I encountered during the process of interviews. This bias will be explained in detail later in the section 'Problems and Limitations'.

Western Turkey: The participant observation in Western Turkey was conducted in June 2014 in Ayvalık. I visited the HDP building to meet the people who were members of the party and observe their activities. I was aware through my personal contacts and my familiarity with the place that HDP was used, in addition to organising events, as a meeting point for some locals to socialise, to gather, and to discuss recent political events (field notes, 2 June 2014). In accordance with the definition of "participant-as-observer" detailed by Roy (1970), I made "no secret of my investigation" and "made it known that research was my overriding interest" (1970: 217). In addition to the interviews that I conducted there, I occasionally went there, introduced myself as a researcher, and observed the daily discussions people would have amongst themselves. I always carried my tape recorder with me and I always informed the people when I turned the tape recorder on. I was always welcomed and met there with a cup of tea, but when I was taking the role of the researcher, I never intervened in the discussions and I only spoke if I was asked about something. I kept the tape recorder going for as long as possible; however, there were times when relevant data would emerge when the tape recorder was off. As my presence as a researcher was known during those discussions, I considered this a type of 'consent' and I took notes at the end of the day.

Southeast Turkey: In Southeast Turkey, I undertook participant observation only in Derik, where I participated in and observed the everyday lives of individuals regularly. Throughout my stay in Derik, even after I moved to the house of a local

after the first week, I went to the patisserie [*pastane*] every day to "hang out" (Geertz 1998) there. The reason for this was similar to the function of HDP in Ayvalık in that the specific patisserie was the hang-out place for most locals (field notes, 25 April 2013). I would usually go there first thing in the morning to have my breakfast, to read the newspapers, and to have informal conversations with the people there about the current news. After I left there in the morning to go to other places, I would still come back to the *pastane* during my breaks to have tea and socialise with the locals. In addition to collecting data, this also helped with the process of getting to know people and introducing myself to the locals. Within the first couple of days of my stay, most locals were aware of my presence as a researcher – so much so that the owner of a food place told me one day that he was surprised that he did not see me passing by his place for a couple of days (field notes, 2 May 2013). This suggests that people became used to my presence. This way, I was able to initiate informal conversations, which turned out to be a crucial source for data collection. Right next to the *pastane*, there was a building which was used for educational purposes. This was a place providing free support for poor students with their courses (interview, 28 April 2013), which are taught in Turkish in the official education system. Teachers would work as volunteers to help the students and use Kurdish to explain the unclear points. Twice, I sat in one of the classrooms and observed the interaction between the students and the teacher, where the conversation was exclusively in Kurdish. After I solidified my presence in the field as a researcher, I participated in different activities with the locals to deepen my relationship with them: I went to nearby villages, visited the institution that prepares students for the university exam, was invited to dinner/tea at people's homes, and stayed in some locals' houses for a couple of nights. By the end of my stay, I established very close relationships with the locals there, some of whom I still keep in touch with. The way I took notes during my stay in Derik varied: when it was available and appropriate, I used my tape recorder after I let the respondents know about it. During one of my class observations, I used my tape recorder, and during the other I took written notes. If I did not have the chance and opportunity to use my tape recorder during my visit to people's houses, I took "jotted notes" (Bryman 2008: 420) at the end of the day.

Even though I did not engage in formal participant observation during my stay in Mardin, a public meeting required me, as a researcher, to do an observation. During my stay in Mardin, a member of the Wise Men Commission[48] visited the town. It was more of an informal gathering between that particular member, who was a famous filmmaker in Turkey, and the people of Mardin in order for the voices of the people to be heard (field notes, 18 April 2013). I went there with my tape recorder and recorded the whole meeting. The meeting was public and there were cameras recording the event for TV channels, so I did not consider this as a violation of ethical principles.

Before finishing this section, it is necessary to provide a general profile of the 33 respondents. The main aim of this research is to unpack how 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey, rather than claiming to be a representative study of 'Kurdishness'. That is why, when choosing respondents, the priority was not to find a representative group in terms of age, gender or social status. Therefore, it is fair to say that there is a variety amongst the respondents in terms of their occupations, age, and social status. A table of the respondents showing their occupations and the locations they are based in is provided at Table 1 in the Appendix. The respondents consisted mostly of teachers, students (both high-school and university students), journalists, and construction workers. Their ages varied from mid-teens to the late fifties. The following discussion aims to elaborate on that table.

Since religious or sectarian factors do not constitute part of the research questions, I did not particularly ask for which religious group or sect, if any, the respondents belong to. The respondents' religious or sectarian loyalties were only brought up by the respondents themselves if they wanted to. The aim here is not to undermine the role that religion plays in the lives of people. Chapters 3 and 4 will show how crucial the decrease or increase of the significance of religion in state rhetoric is for manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. Chapter 4 will specifically discuss that putting religion into state rhetoric has allowed AKP to emphasise Islam as a common bond

[48] The Wise Men Commission was established during the Peace Process by the government. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then-prime minister, declared that the role of the commission would be "to prepare the public [for the process]" (*Today's Zaman* 3 April 2013). This was a commission consisting of 63 members of civil society, divided into seven groups (one for each region of Turkey). This commission will be discussed in Chapter 4.

between Turks and Kurds. Therefore, it might be considered that the level of religiosity is a significant factor for the role that state rhetoric plays in forms of 'Kurdishness'.

Being a Sunni Kurd or an Alevi Kurd is another factor worth considering when discussing 'Kurdishness' in Turkey. Alevis differ from Sunnis in many respects in terms of how they practise their religions. The traditional Sunni Islam practices such as fasting in Ramadan [*oruç*], praying five times a day [*namaz*], and hajj [*hac*] do not exist in Alevi traditions, and Alevis claim "obedience to a set of simple moral norms" (van Bruinessen 1996: 7) instead of Sharia laws. Throughout the history of the Republic, there have been tensions and even brutal clashes between Sunnis and Alevis, especially during the 1970s. Part of this could be explained through Alevis' further integration into the society when they came into close contact with strict Sunnis (van Bruinessen 1996: 8). Considering the rather secular approach Alevis have adopted, it is perhaps not surprising that Alevis have generally been in favour of the Kemalist ideology with its emphasis on secularism. To illustrate, the Sheikh Said Revolt, which will be the focus of Chapter 3 as one of the most important manifestations of 'Kurdishness' during the early Republican period, was not really supported by the Kurdish Alevi tribes (van Bruinessen 1996). The sympathetical approach of Alevi Kurds towards the Kemalist ideology was also mentioned by one of my respondents, Arzu. She mentioned that most people from Dersim, the heartland of Alevi Kurds in Turkey, were "very Kemalist and very loyal to CHP" (group interview, 19 June 2014). Therefore, it would be naive to assume that religious and sectarian differences have no significance on manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. One of the arguments in this thesis is that the use of religion (or lack thereof) in state rhetoric plays a significant role in different forms of 'Kurdishness', so this thesis does not endorse such a claim. It is only that religious and sectarian factors were not the focus of this research, so I decided to leave this issue to the respondents' own will to be brought up. Amongst the respondents, only one (Emel) was openly emphasising her Alevi identity and some others (Ibrahim, Emir, Arzu) mentioned about the Sunni-Alevi division amongst Kurds. In the end, I did not consider this to be significant enough to be one of the points to focus on for this research.

The factor of age is also something that this research does not mainly focus on. However, it is worth discussing one of the most important differences between the younger and the older generation that was observed whilst collecting the data. Generally, the younger respondents (high-school and university students, and some construction workers) entertained the idea of an independent Kurdistan more often than some of the older respondents. Some of them were even critical of Abdullah Öcalan due to PKK's transforming agenda. The older respondents, on the other hand, generally used a more compromising language. Whilst this might be simply the excitement and enthusiasm that the youth brings, it is also worth considering the occupational effects. Individuals who do not yet have an established status, such as students, might be more likely to embrace the more radical options than others.

Here, however, it is important to emphasise the main argument of this thesis: forms of 'Kurdishness' are *customised* and *personalised* through individuals' interaction with the three different elements discussed in this thesis. With its focus on individuality, one thing that this thesis avoids, and wants to avoid, is generalisations about groups of people. Therefore, whilst it is necessary to provide a general overview of the group of respondents, it is also crucial to keep the uniqueness of each individual in mind.

2.3. Going Back to the Fieldsite

At this point, it is necessary to add that I went back to Ayvalık one more time after I finished data collection in June 2014. During the summer of 2015,[49] I visited Ayvalık again. Even though the sole purpose of the visit was not research-related, I re-visited the HDP building to greet the locals there and to catch up with them. I also visited *Yenimahalle*, 'the neighbourhood of Kurds'. Even though this was a neighbourhood that I frequented during my data collection, the re-visit of this neighbourhood provided some unintended data. Chapter 6, where the influence of neighbourhoods on manifestation(s) of 'Kurdishness' is explored, describes *Yenimahalle* and the pictures shown of *Yenimahalle* in that chapter were taken during this visit. The

[49] This was during the writing-up period of this thesis.

pictures showing Turkish flags hanging from the balconies of apartment buildings were taken spontaneously during one of my visits to the neighbourhood in the summer of 2015 as they revealed an aspect of that neighbourhood that was relevant for the purposes of this research: a 'Kurdish' neighbourhood within a 'Western' town in Turkey manifesting a form of "banal" (Billig 1995) Turkish nationalism, unlike the 'non-Kurdish' neighbourhoods within the same town.

2.4. Documents as Data Sources

To explore the role that state rhetoric plays on how 'Kurdishness' is manifested, firstly the state rhetoric needed to be analysed. For this purpose, state rhetoric from two different periods of the Turkish Republic were chosen: as the process of interviewing and participant observation took place during the initial phases of Peace Process, one part of the document analysis looked at the rhetoric during the AKP period to complement this. Then, this rhetoric was compared to that from the early Republican period (1923-1938) under the Kemalist ideology. The reason for this was to explore if the AKP rhetoric differs from the rhetoric on which the Republic was founded and, if so, in what ways. For this purpose, in Chapters 3 and 4, where I discuss the state rhetoric of the Kemalist period and the AKP period respectively, I look at the party programmes of AKP and CHP and the laws and the regulations that were adopted during both periods. This way, rhetoric during these two periods was compared to explore the main characteristics of both.

Secondly, I analysed speeches of the state leaders in these two periods. Apart from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who were both the leaders of their respective parties, the statements of other members who belonged to those parties were selectively included in the analysis. The speeches in Turkish that are quoted in this thesis were all translated by me into English. The transcriptions of the speeches and the statements during the AKP period were accessed on the official AKP website and, when they were not available there, I searched through media archive to find excerpts of speeches. In some occasions, the videos of the whole

speeches uploaded on Youtube were used. To find the speeches and statements during the early Republican period, secondary data were used.

Thirdly, the policies implemented during both periods were selectively analysed. For this reason, I searched through the Official Gazzette[50] and newspaper archives, including *ANF News*, *BBC News*, *Bugün*, *Habertürk*, *Hürriyet* and its English version *Hürriyet Daily News*, *Milliyet*, *Zaman* and its English version *Today's Zaman,* and *TRT Haber*. *ANF News* is a Kurdish news agency whose access has been blocked by Turkish courts many times; *TRT Haber* is the news agency of the state organ; *Habertürk*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Zaman* are Turkish newspapers that have been amongst the most popular newspapers in Turkey; and *Bugün* and *Zaman* are Turkish newspapers that are closely affiliated with the *Gülen* movement.[51]

2.5. Problems and Limitations

Even though I took every care as a researcher, the qualitative research, due to its more flexible nature, is open to some liabilities. In this section, I will assess the problems I encountered during my data collection, how I dealt with them, and the weaknesses of the methods I applied.

2.5.1. Selection Bias

One of the problems that need to be discussed is how before and during the initial days of data collection, I took the concept of 'Kurdishness' as something that was defined according to a given framework. Hence, I selected my respondents according to this taken-for-granted 'Kurdishness'. That is, the respondents that were selected in the initial days of the data collection were the ones *I* perceived as Kurds: as I did not

[50] *Official Gazzette* is the governmental organ and can be accessed for free at its official website: http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/default.aspx# .

[51] *Gülen* movement, established by the Sufi scholar Fethullah Gülen, is a "liberal Turkish-Islam" movement (Aras and Caha 2000) that emphasises moderation, tolerance, and modernisation. Even though this movement has been highly influential for a long time behind the scenes of Turkish politics, the last period of AKP (2011-2015) has seen a direct attack against Gülen and against his followers, with Erdoğan calling it a "parallel structure" within the state. For a detailed explanation of this movement, see Aras and Caha (2000) and Park (2008).

use a survey beforehand to ask the respondents whether *they* perceive themselves as Kurds, the initial respondents were the ones who were perceived as Kurds by myself or by others I contacted. To illustrate this, the first contacts I established were the ones that were either suggested to me because I "really needed to talk to them if research related to Kurds is done in any way" (field notes, 18 February 2013)[52] or those whom I perceived as Kurds because their parents were Kurds or they grew up in a Kurdish-speaking environment. It is fair to argue, then, that my perception of 'Kurdishness' was based on ethnic and linguistic factors, which meant excluding self-defined Kurds who are not attached to the Kurdish language in any way or including people whose parents are ethnic Kurds even though they do not define themselves as Kurds. As this research is interested in the role that various factors (regions, language, and state rhetoric) play in manifestations of 'Kurdishness', analysing the contextual variability of 'Kurdishness' was essential. To explore the situational variability of 'Kurdishness', or how its boundaries are (re-)shaped, it was essential not to impose some pre-defined categories on the respondents. When I noticed that my preconceptions of 'Kurdishness' would result in some bias with regards to the selection of the respondents, I decided to apply a different method.

That is why I decided that participant observation would be useful in overcoming these issues. Undertaking participant observation helped me as it allowed me to engage with people first before conducting any formal interviews. It also gave me time to make my presence as a researcher known in the area so that people who thought of themselves as relevant to my research would be willing to participate. During all the interviews, I also paid attention to not reveal any assumptions about the respondents. For instance, if the discussion was about the Peace Process, I phrased my sentences in a way that does not refer to that specific respondent. That is, I referred to Kurds in general instead of to that specific respondent to let the respondent decide how to define himself or herself. In the end, participant observation allowed me to familiarise myself with people and collect data that would not otherwise be possible. For example, as will be illustrated in Chapter 5, there were instances where individuals would define themselves as Kurds even though they

[52] As was explained earlier, my first interviewee Mahsun, for instance, was contacted through a former academic who works now as a journalist. This is a quote from this contact.

were not fluent in the Kurdish language, which could not be revealed if I stayed with my initial approach.

2.5.2. Issues Regarding Language

One of the most difficult challenges I faced in my research design concerned the language in which I conducted my interviews. The fact that I did not know fluent Kurdish meant that I either had to rely on a translator for each respondent or I had to conduct the interviews and carry informal conversations in Turkish, which was the second language for most of the respondents.

When I told the respondents about my research, none of them asked for a translator and all of them agreed to do the interview in Turkish. So, the idea of a translator was never mentioned by the respondents and I did not bring it up. Did this mean that I had to exclude potential respondents? Not to a significant extent, as speaking and comprehending Turkish was common in all field sites. Naturally, there were some exceptions to this and it was possible to observe situations where an individual was not fluent in Turkish, especially amongst the older generation: there was a family I interacted with frequently in Derik, consisting of one mother and her three daughters living in the same house. Most nights, I was invited to dinner in their house. We would have dinners together and, after dinner, we would all watch TV together. I was always welcomed in their house and had great interactions with each member of the family. The mother, however, did not speak any Turkish and whenever I went to their house, she always greeted me in Kurdish. Our 'TV time' after dinners consisted of watching the news and TV shows such as soap operas. Even though we always followed the news on Kurdish channels,[53] the TV shows we watched were always on Turkish channels. Once I asked one of her daughters whether her mother enjoys these TV shows in Turkish and she answered that her mother enjoyed them very much and she could now comprehend Turkish due to watching TV channels in Turkish (field notes, 10 May 2013). This incident suggests that even older generation Kurdish-

[53] As will be discussed in Chapter 4, there is one state-funded TV channel in Turkey that broadcasts exclusively in Kurdish (*TRT 6*). This means that one has to have satellite to be able to watch other TV channels broadcasting in Kurdish.

speakers now, due to advances in technology, might be familiar with the Turkish language. Speaking or understanding Turkish for a Kurdish-speaker in Turkey is the norm rather than the exception and, hence, I decided that this would not exclude data to a significant extent from my data collection.

A potential problem with relying on a translator during the interviews was that, in some situations, the existence of a third person would not be welcomed by the respondent. There were instances of one-to-one interviews where the respondent was so emotional that the interview had to be interrupted for a while. If a third person were present in some of the interviews, I would not have the same interaction with the respondents as I did. It would also be unpractical during my participant observation in Derik as most conversations happened spontaneously during the course of everyday life, so having a translator around all the time would not be easy. Therefore, the fact that I did not use a translator did not create significant problems for the purposes of this research.

The choice of not using a translator, however, could be criticised in two aspects. Firstly, it could be argued that there was a selection bias when it came to respondents as that meant the elimination of individuals who could not speak Turkish. However, this point, and why this would not create significant problems for this research, was explained in the previous paragraph. Another angle through which to look at this is to question the fact that all the respondents could speak Turkish and whether this would have any significant implications for the data. The fact that Turkish has always been the only official language of the state means that an ordinary citizen of the state, even though he or she may have only spoken Kurdish up until that point, would have to learn Turkish throughout primary school. Even if someone does not go to school, the compulsory military service (for males) and the existence of many TV channels in Turkish, as the above mentioned incident illustrates, makes it possible that most citizens would encounter the Turkish language in some way or another in their lives. Also, some of my respondents were native speakers of Turkish as one of the sub-questions I wanted to explore was the relationship between language and the manifestation of ‘Kurdishness’. For these reasons, I did not find that all of my respondents spoke Turkish would create a bias for my data.

A second criticism could be raised about the fact that most of the respondents were narrating their stories and having daily conversations in Turkish, which was their second language. As discussed earlier, having a translator during the interviews would not necessarily be the better option. Also, having Turkish as their second language did not mean that the respondents were struggling with expressing themselves. All of them were fluent in Turkish and, in fact, their use of grammar was perfect.[54] Hasan suggested that the reason for this could be the fact that they learn Turkish in an academic way instead of learning it from the parents (interview, 17 April 2013). Therefore, I did not consider that the stories the respondents told would be misleading. This is not to underestimate the importance of speaking in one's mother tongue. After all, to be able to speak freely in one's mother tongue (specifically, the right to have an education in the mother tongue) has been one of the basic demands for Kurds, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. It only suggests that, as Hasan stated, speaking Turkish "is not part of the problem" (interview, 17 April 2013) for the respondents. As this research makes use of life stories and of the narration of those stories, the analysis of the data is not significantly affected by the exact wording that the respondents used. If anything, my translation from Turkish into English was more likely to be problematic. While translating from Turkish to English, I tried to stay as close as possible to the original statements provided by the respondents. However, I provide the original term in brackets when an English translation was not available or failed to capture its original meaning.

2.5.3. Ethical Considerations

As mentioned in the previous sections, I officially started my fieldwork with my first interview in February 2013. Before starting the fieldwork, I completed the Level 2

[54] There would even be instances in Derik when jokingly, some respondents would challenge me about my knowledge of the Turkish language by showing me literature questions from an exam (field notes, 3 May 2013). Hasan, for instance, also mentioned that he used to have perfect scores on Turkish exams and he even wrote books in Turkish (interview, 17 April 2013). Some students in Artuklu University stated that the easiest part of the university exams for them was Turkish Language and Literature (field notes, 16 April 2013), which would suggest that they do not find it a struggle to express themselves in Turkish.

Ethical Review Form[55] for the Research and Research Ethics Committee within the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Edinburgh. A Level 2 of scrutiny is usually required for "research on sensitive topics…or research that could adversely affect participants or the researcher."[56] The potential negative effects of this research were two-fold. The first concerned the interview respondents: there were no physically invasive or potentially harmful physical procedures involved, yet, since the respondents talked about their life stories from their earlier years, this might have potentially caused some psychological discomfort for some respondents. I dealt with this by making the respondents as comfortable as possible, and did not force any respondent if emotional stress was visible. Additionally, I always complied with their requests of switching off the recorder if they asked for it. For instance, once during my stay in Derik, a group of students were talking amongst each other when I joined their conversation. They welcomed my presence at the table since my presence as a researcher was, at that time, already known in the town (see Section 2.2.3.2. for this), yet one of the students specifically asked me not to record anything and not to use any of the conversations they had as data. I complied with this throughout the writing of this thesis. Another example of this is when one of the respondents started crying in the middle of the interview while talking about his childhood and I asked the respondent not to continue the interview.

Secondly, the data collection process also posed some risks to myself as the researcher. During my data collection in Western Turkey, when I told a close friend of mine that I would go to Southeast Turkey soon to do my fieldwork there, she looked worried and asked me if I was going there alone (field notes, 30 March 2013). This little anecdote gives an idea about how going to Southeast Turkey is as perceived risky. As discussed in the Introduction, the military operations between the Turkish state and PKK, which have continued for decades, contribute to the reinforcement of these perceptions. The declaration of a ceasefire between PKK and the Turkish state on 21 March 2013 was in that sense good timing for the purposes of my research since it likely created a 'safer' environment for the people there. In the

[55] This form could be accessed online at this link: https://ethics.sps.ed.ac.uk/ethics_form [Accessed 19 October 2015].
[56] SSPS Research Ethics Online Self-Assessment Procedures could be accessed at this link: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/178840/SSPSEthicsProceduresAug2015_LRJ.pdf [Accessed 19 October 2015].

end, I travelled to Southeast Turkey with a close friend of my parents who had lived and worked in Derik for one year. Even though this was not designed to prevent me from any possible physical danger,[57] it did contribute to me feeling more comfortable during my stay there.

In all of my correspondence, the respondents were aware of my presence as a researcher and of the purposes of my research. I asked for permission every time I wanted to use my digital tape recorder and I told everyone that I would not reveal their true names throughout any kind of presentation of the data. Even though some of the respondents were content with the use of their real names in the thesis, I still gave every respondent a different pseudonym[58] and used them consistently while writing up the thesis to retain anonymity. In most of the interviews and informal chats, the conversation would come to a point where the respondents would tell their life stories and some of these were very personal. To respect these personal relationships and to maintain the trust I established with my respondents, I decided not to reveal any of the real names even if the respondents gave me permission for it before our correspondence.

Despite all the precautions I took before conducting the fieldwork, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of good timing for this research. During the writing-up stage of this thesis, military operations between the state and PKK re-started. Recently, the situation in Southeast Turkey has deteriorated, which has seen the state imposing a curfew in many districts, forcing residents to flee their neighbourhoods (*Hürriyet Daily News* 28 January 2016). Conducting any kind of fieldwork under these conditions would be extremely difficult regardless of the precautions taken by the researcher. The ceasefire period that lasted for almost two years until July 2015 has been the exception rather than the norm, so the importance of good timing could not be emphasised more.

2.6. Conclusion

[57] The friend of my parents was a middle-aged female who works as a teacher, so it was not likely that she would act as a 'bodyguard'.

[58] It is necessary to mention here that the pseudonyms used in this thesis are not necessarily Kurdish names; they are random names that could be used by both Kurds and Turks.

This chapter discussed the different data collection methods used in this research. A "triangulation" (Denzin 1978) of methods was essential to explore the research questions explained in Section 1. To explore the role that different regions play on manifestations of 'Kurdishness', data was collected in two different parts of Turkey: Western and Southeast Turkey. Interviews were conducted to explore the role that language plays in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested, and both native- and non-native speakers of Kurdish were included. Through the interviews, I was able to collect life stories of the respondents with regards to the earlier periods of their lives and with regards to more recent phenomenon such as the Peace Process. Interviews were conducted in both regions of Turkey. Participant observation was conducted in Ayvalık (Western Turkey) and in Derik (Southeast Turkey). To explore the role of state rhetoric in manifestation of 'Kurdishness', documents were used as data sources. The next chapter will discuss the state rhetoric during the early Republican period of Turkey (1923-1938), which will be the first of two chapters focused on state rhetoric.

3. FIRST 'MOMENT OF TRANSITION': FROM THE EMPIRE TO THE KEMALIST STATE

- "What the Republican regime has been doing in Tunceli is not a military operation, but the march of civilisation" (18 July 1937, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, cited in Yegen 1999: 563).

This chapter is the first of the two that examines the relationship between state rhetoric and 'Kurdishness'. For this purpose, it will first discuss the characteristics of the rhetoric that was applied during the Kemalist period of the Republic, lasting from the establishment of the Republic in 1923 until the end of "High Kemalism" (Cagaptay 2006) in 1938 will be discussed. This period exhibited a 'moment of transition': the transition from a multicultural, multilingual, and multi-ethnic Empire into a secular, modern, and central nation-state. The events of Dersim in 1937-38 were the last massive manifestation of any form of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey until the 1970s. Therefore, the period until 1938 will be taken into account when examining the role that state rhetoric plays in manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. The discussion in the first half of the chapter will show that Kemalist rhetoric during the early Republican period was based on the principles of modernisation/Westernisation, secularism, centralisation, and also an emphasis on the Turkish language.

The second half of the chapter will discuss the forms 'Kurdishness' took during this period. It will do that by focusing on two public manifestations of 'Kurdishness' during the early Republican period: the Sheikh Said Revolt (1925) and the Dersim uprising (1937-38). Both of these manifestations include ethnic, religious, and tribal elements as a response against the Kemalist rhetoric. This chapter begins the discussion on 'Kurdishness' by focusing on state rhetoric of the first 'moment of transition'. Chapter 4 will continue the discussion on state rhetoric by focusing on the second 'moment of transition', the AKP period.

3.1. Kemalist Rhetoric and Its Policies

The history of the early Republican period and its policies will be analysed in two parts: a) the period from the establishment of the Republic to 1931, during which the

young nation-state was experiencing a transitional phase; and b) the age of "High Kemalism" (Cagaptay 2006), that is, the period from 1931 to the death of Atatürk in 1938.

3.1.1. The 1920s: The Transitional Phase of Kemalism

3.1.1.1. Changes in the Usage of Rhetoric: a Comparison Between the Pre-Republican and the Post-Republican Period

To understand the period of establishment of the Republic, it is essential to take into account the fact that any Republic that would be established was going to inherit the multicultural characteristics of the society that used to inhabit the lands of the Ottoman Empire. The Republic's nation-builders inherited "an obsession with territorial integrity and national unity that seems to be rooted in the trauma of the gradual dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire" (van Bruinessen 1984: 226). This 'obsession' was reflected in the approach of the elites towards the groups they considered threats to the territorial integrity of the state.

The period before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, however, saw the cooperation of nation-builders and the Kurdish tribal leaders against the Western powers. The leader of the Turkish Independence Movement, Mustafa Kemal (later to be officially called Atatürk), did not hesitate to use rhetoric that would appeal to Kurds by promoting "Sunni Islam as a key identity marker in the future Turkish state" (Natali 2005: 71). He had written personal letters to Kurdish *aghas* and *sheikhs,*[59] promising to save Islam from the Western powers (Beşikçi 1979: 270; Natali 2005: 71). By the end of 1919, Mustafa Kemal managed to rally the support of a significant amount of Kurdish tribes (Loizides 2010: 515; McDowall 1996: 186), and those *aghas* and *sheikhs* were willing to give their support to Mustafa Kemal "in the belief that they were fighting for the Muslim Patrimony in which they had a share" (McDowall 1992: 18). To strengthen the religious sentiments of Kurdish society, Mustafa Kemal pragmatically used the rhetoric of Islam in his speeches,

[59] Kurdish society has been dominated by tribes and "local tightly knit rural communities" (Yavuz 2001: 3), and each of these tribes are led by a different *agha* or *shaykh.*

putting special emphasis on the use of concepts such as *khilafa* and a 'Muslim brotherhood'. The following excerpt by Mustafa Kemal illustrates this point: "As long as there are fine people with honour and respect, Turks and Kurds will continue to live together as brothers around the institution of *khilafa,* and an unshakeable iron tower will be raised against internal and external enemies" (quoted in McDowall 1996: 187). Similarly, after the establishment of a Grand National Assembly in Ankara in 1920, he stated in a secret meeting:

> The general principle is that the various Muslim elements living in the country…are genuine brothers who would respect each other's ethnic, local, and moral norms [laws]…If one thing is certain, it is this: Kurds, Turks, Laz, Circassians, all these Muslim elements living within national borders have shared interests (quoted in Yegen 2009: 598).

Yet in another statement, Mustafa Kemal declared that the unity he is trying to create is "not only Turkish or Circassian" but "a mixture of one Muslim element" (quoted in McDowall 1996: 188). The idea of Kurds having their rights and even being granted autonomy was entertained in the Constitution of 1921[60] and in a draft law that was approved in the Assembly in 1922: the Constitution stated that "provinces were autonomous in local affairs" (Mango 1999: 12), and, in 1922, the National Assembly proposed to establish "an autonomous administration for the Kurdish nation in harmony with their national customs" (McDowall 1996: 188) within Kurdistan.[61]

Mardin argues that Mustafa Kemal declared his goal as the salvation of the *millet*[62] during the early years "to gather and energise a population materially and morally depleted by the Turkish involvement in the Great War" (1997: 116). It is beyond the scope and the intentions of this research to discuss whether these moves by Mustafa Kemal were simply pragmatic as the conditions required or sincere efforts. What is crucial to emphasise, however, is that throughout the Independence War and for a while afterwards (before the Republic was established in 1923), Mustafa Kemal did

[60] The English translation of 1921 Constitution is not available. However, some selected articles of the Constitution were translated into English and can be found at http://genckaya.bilkent.edu.tr/1921C.html [Accessed 30 April 2015].
[61] The lands of Kurdistan, according to this draft law, were limited to the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, and Dersim (Natali 2005: 73).
[62] *Millet*, the Arabic word for 'nation', was defined as "membership of a religious community" (McDowall 1996: 2) during the Ottoman period. According to the Ottoman *millet* system, then, Turks and Kurds were considered part of the same *millet*.

not use assimilationist rhetoric regarding the Kurds or any other Muslim groups within the lands of what would be Turkey.[63] He recognised the multi-ethnic character of the society and, as was stated earlier, autonomy to a certain extent was promised.

It was clear, however, that these ideas were dropped in the 1924 Constitution. As the first constitution of Turkey after the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the introduction of the 1924 Constitution clearly states the policies of the newly-established independent state:

> Our state is a nation-state. It is not a multi-national state. The state does not recognize any nation other than Turks. There are other peoples which come from different races [ethnic groups] and who should have equal rights within the country. Yet it is not possible to give rights to these people in accordance with their racial [ethnic] status (quoted in Yegen 2009: 599).

With this statement, the newly-established Turkish state recognised the existence of different ethnic groups within its borders, yet it did not consider Kurds (or any of the other ethnic groups) as a separate nation. Since there is only one nation within the borders of the state, it followed that there could not be any rights granted to any of those ethnic groups due to their ethnic status. It was clear, then, that the newly-established Republic was going to be based on the principles of the nation-state, instead of a multi-ethnic, multi-national state, which was not in accordance with its demographic characteristics.[64]

3.1.1.2. The Republican Understanding of the 'Turkish Nation' and its Concordant Policies

[63] Mango (1999) cites quotations by Atatürk in which he refers to Jews as part of the multi-ethnic character of the state, such as in the following excerpt: "There is a primary element which has established the Turkish State. Then there are [other] elements which have joined their endeavours and their histories with those of this primary element. There are citizens from this element too" (quoted in Mango 1999: 16). As I discuss in the following sections, I would argue that the requirements of creating a modern and secular nation-state resulted in the importance of the decline of Islam in state rhetoric. Hence, Kurds and non-Muslim groups within Turkish society after the establishment of the Republic were both taken as 'others'.

[64] Due to invisibility of ethnic data in the censuses, there is no official information regarding the ethnicity of the citizens of Turkey. However, it is possible to have an idea about the diversity of the ethnic groups of Turkey at that time by looking at the languages spoken by people: by 1927, 1,764,985 people (13.58% of the total population in Turkey) spoke a language other than Turkish, 1,184,446 of whom spoke Kurdish (Cagaptay 2006: 16).

Soon after the Republic was established in 1923, it became clear that the main aim of the leaders of the nation-state was to establish "a modern state along European lines with an identity that was explicitly Turkish" (McDowall 1992: 18). For this reason, the Republic's nation-builders started a process of 'Turkification' (Loizides 2010: 516; Yegen 2009: 600). For this to happen, however, it was first necessary to define a 'Turk' and its main features. Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution gives the definition of a 'Turk' "as a political term." It states that "the name Turk shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to, race or religion." This kind of a definition of 'Turkishness', at the first glance, seems in accordance with the idea of an inclusive civic nationalism as opposed to the more exclusive ethnic nationalism (Brown 1999; Brubaker 1990; Guibernau 1996; Kohn 1945).[65] A closer look at the practices and policies of the nation-state, however, reveal that the practice of belonging to the Turkish nation differed significantly from the idea of an 'inclusive' nation. As will be discussed shortly, what belonging to the Turkish nation meant, for the leaders of the nation-state, was for ethnic groups to abandon their culture, their language, and their identity. It is possible to argue, then, that based on this article of the 1924 Constitution, there was an "official gap between citizenship and Turkishness" (Yegen 2009: 607).

The discussions in the National Assembly regarding the Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution are manifestations of this understanding. Hamdullah Suphi, one of the Deputies for Istanbul, stated the following as a response to what it takes to become a Turk:

> Someone asked me 'How can I become a Turk? Could you please tell me?' I said, 'You can be a Turk. Jews who left Spain and came here with the Spanish language will be Turks after accepting the language of the country and the Turkish schools as their own, like Jews in France, like Jews in England' (quoted in Aydıngün & Aydıngün 2004: 426).

[65] Al (2015b) argues that instead of the dichotomy of ethnic vs. civic nationalism, the concept of 'Turkishness', 'monolithic nationhood' as he calls it, should be read from a singularity/plurality framework. Until the 1990s, the policies aiming the monolithic establishment of Turkishness persisted, he argues, leaving no room for hyphenated identities. That is, "hyphenated self-identifications of Turkish-Kurd (or Kurdish-Turk) have been oxymoronic in the contest of Turkey" (p. 97).

Another statement by Hamdullah Suphi also asserts that Armenians and Jews could not be acknowledged as Turks unless they abandoned "their languages, as well as Armenianness and Jewishness" (quoted in Cagaptay 2006: 15).

At this point, a question might be asked whether this understanding of 'Turkishness' as an exclusive term is only applied to the non-Muslim groups of Turkey, or whether it also included Kurds who are predominantly Muslim. The following discussion will try to show that the latter is the case. However, it is important to note here that there was indeed a difference in the way the Turkish state viewed its non-Muslim and Muslim citizens. The nation-state saw both groups as those who needed to be assimilated into the concept of 'Turkishness' that was being constructed by the new Kemalist ideology. The non-Muslim groups, however, were recognised as minorities by the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, where "it stressed the common religious identity of Turks as Muslims" (Yavuz 2001: 7), whereas the official rhetoric of the nation-state was "based on the denial of the physical existence of the Kurds" (Yegen 1999: 560). In other words, Kurds, according to the official discourse, were seen as a "population" (Cagaptay 2006: 21) instead of a separate ethnic identity. In a way, it was easier to categorise a non-Muslim citizen as a minority, whereas a Kurd was ethnically 'invisible' within the nation-state.

The importance of Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution was that it established the secularist principle on which the new Republic was founded since it "did away, at least legally, with the notion of the nation as an Islamic union" (Heper 2007: 91). The principle of secularism, seen by the Republic's nation-builders as something in accordance with Western principles, provided the foundation for the upcoming policies of the nation-state. As will be elaborated in Chapter 4, the emphasis on Islam also brings about an emphasis on the concept of *ummah*, which is a supra-national concept that unites all Muslims. Hence, by abolishing this common bond, Kurds were not seen as the 'Muslim brothers' of Turks, but as a population that needed to be assimilated into Turkish 'high culture', in Gellnerian terms (Gellner 1983).

The abolishment of the Caliphate[66] in 1924 further consolidated the secular characteristics of the new nation-state. The Caliphate, for the Ottoman administration, was a necessary point of reference as it "prevented/delayed the constitution of Ottoman society on the basis of the logic of ethnic exclusion" (Yegen 1999: 559). For this newly-established Republic, however, it was an obstacle on its way to Westernisation/modernisation. Other secularisation reforms included switching to the Gregorian calendar, closing down of the *medreses* (religious schools), banning the *fez* (the hat that Muslim men used to wear in the Ottoman Empire), and the abolishment of Sharia law, replacing it with the civil code. All these reforms, for Mustafa Kemal, served the purpose of "breaking of links with the Ottoman past" (Cagaptay 2006: 13) so that a modern Turkish state, guided by Western ideals and principles, could be established in the lands of Anatolia. Secularism, then, was one of the ways in which the traditions of the past could be broken down. During the early years of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal made the aim of the nation-state very clear. In one of his speeches in 1925, he stated that the present government "has changed the nature of the common ties among the members of the nation that persisted for centuries; instead of religious and sectarian ties, it now assembles the members of our nation through the bond of Turkish nationality" (quoted in Parla and Davison 2004: 71).

Going back to the discussion of what constitutes the Turkish nation, then, secularism provided one of the principles that the citizens of the new Republic should aim for if they wanted to be considered proper 'Turks'. That is, secularism was one of the ways that the gap between citizenship and 'Turkishness' could be bridged.

Language was another means for the Kemalist state to construct 'Turkishness' through. Mustafa Kemal was aware of the importance of a standardised, national language for the establishment of a national consciousness amongst the peoples of a nation-state. In his words, "a rich national language has great influence on the development of national feeling" (quoted in Çolak 2004: 75). With this purpose in mind, one of the first policies the newly-established Republic adopted was to

[66] Caliphate is the name given to the Muslim community and caliphs are the head of this community. The Ottoman Sultans had the title of caliph since the 14th century, and when the Ottoman Empire collapsed after the First World War, the Republic of Turkey, as the successor state to the Ottoman Empire, also inherited the title of caliph.

recognise Turkish as the sole official language of the state in the 1924 Constitution (Article 2). As quoted earlier, abandoning one's own language and adopting Turkish was seen as *sine qua non* for being a Turk. 'Linguistic assimilation' was expected of all the citizens of Turkey by the Republican elites (Bayar 2011), and the cultural homogenisation that Mustafa Kemal sought for the nation-state could be achieved through linguistic assimilation. In this sense, what the Republican elites had in mind could be understood through Gellner's concept of 'high culture', as discussed in Chapter 1. Different to what Gellner outlines in his discussion, however, it is not modernity and industrialisation that require the establishment of a 'high culture'. Rather, it was the conscious efforts of the state leaders that constructed a 'high culture'.

To create a 'high culture' that is homogeneous and modern, the education system and, hence, a standardised language were seen as essential by Republican elites. In fact, for Mustafa Kemal, language was the essential element "in the creation of Turkishness and a culturally homogeneous, modern and secular society" (Aydıngün & Aydıngün 2004: 426). The Prime Minister at the time, İsmet İnönü, also emphasised "the need for everybody in Turkey to speak Turkish" (Cagaptay 2006: 25). Fearon and Laitin (2000) discuss the different ways of constructing identity, as discussed in Chapter 1, and one of the agents of social construction, in their discussion, is elites (2000: 853). A similar picture could be drawn in the case of 'Turkishness': unlike what primordialists argue, Turkish nationalism was "not the awakening of Turks to national consciousness," but rather was "a project undertaken by intellectuals" (Kadioğlu 1996: 185). The reforms of the 1920s were attempts at creating this identity through differentiating 'Turkishness' from its Ottoman past and making 'non-secular' and 'non-Western' entities as 'the Other' of 'Turkishness'.

With this purpose in mind, the law on the unification of education [*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*] was passed by the National Assembly in 1924. This law provided a standardised education for the masses and was essential in the "construction of Turkishness" (Aydıngün & Aydıngün 2004: 426). In 1926, Kurds were the specific target of another language policy that aimed at the solidification of 'Turkishness': the Eastern Regions Reform Plan [*Şark Islahat Planı*]. With this plan, speaking Kurdish was banned in the western regions of Turkey and using any language other than Turkish

was banned in certain eastern towns that were predominated by Kurds (Bayar 2011: 116).

The biggest language reform of the 1920s, however, happened in the form of adopting the Latin alphabet for Turkish language in 1928. This "linguistic engineering" plan (Çolak 2004: 68) initiated by the Republican elites aimed at a complete breakaway from the last ties to the Ottoman past. The alphabet revolution also aimed at eliminating the intelligentsia who were educated in Ottoman Turkish with Arabic letters. This provided total control for the state in establishing a new intelligentsia, one which was devoted to the principles of the nation-state. Apart from practical reasons, such as that the Latin alphabet was more suitable for writing Turkish, switching to the Latin alphabet from the Arabic letters was also a symbolic act for the Republican elites. It is possible to see this mind-set in the words of Mustafa Kemal:

> So long as Turkish was written from right to left, it could never properly express *the ideals of European civilization*. The picturesque involutions and intricacies of Arabic script afforded a psychological background to *the Oriental mentality which stood as the real enemy of the Republic* (italics added for emphasis, quoted in Wortham 1930: 188-189).

The 'obsession' of the Kemalist ideology with modernisation and Westernisation is reflected in this quotation. Through this "act of forgetting" (Çolak 2004: 73), ties to the Ottoman past were cut. This could again be explained through Gellner's theory of modernisation, in which he argues that a standard education system and its standard medium of instruction are necessitated by modernity. In Chapter 1, it was discussed that one of the criticisms to Gellner's theory was that he overemphasised the functionality aspect in his theory and downplayed the role of the state. In Turkish case, modernity was imposed by the Republican elites. This suggests the importance of agency in the construction of a Turkish 'high culture'.

All in all, the 1920s was the decade that saw the establishment of a new Republic from the ashes of a multi-cultural Empire. The aim of this newly-established Republic was to be a modern, secular, and homogeneous nation-state with Western ideals. The policies of 'Turkification' mentioned in this section should be, therefore, considered with this aim in mind. It was a decade of both the establishment of

national sovereignty and "doing things" (Bayar 2011: 114), and it was crucial for setting out the principles on which the nation-state would be based. In other words, it was a period when "a non-western, de-central, a-national, and non-secular Empire" was transformed into a "western, central, national, and secular" nation-state (Yegen 1999: 559). Therefore, the concepts of 'westernisation/modernisation', 'centralisation', and 'secularisation' were essential in the formation of official state rhetoric. It should be noted here that it would not be unusual to expect that all these changes imposed to society from the 'top-down' would affect many groups. Every group that was seen as 'non-Western', 'non-secular', and 'non-central' by the Republican elites would be a threat to the newly-established Republic. Kurds were one of those groups who were seen as 'non-Western', 'non-secular', and 'non-central' by the Republican elites. The next decade, the 1930s, would see the further solidification of this understanding through the policies targeted specifically at Kurds.

3.1.2. The 1930s: Solidification of the Kemalist Rhetoric

After a tumultuous decade that saw the establishment of a new nation-state and the adoption of a new alphabet, it was time for this new order to be solidified. In 1931, CHP, which was established by Mustafa Kemal in 1923 and had been acting as the party representing the interests of the Republican elites, announced the six founding principles of Kemalism: republicanism, nationalism, populism, étatism, secularism, and reformism. Another important development at the start of this decade happened with regards to the definition of the 'Turkish nation'. In the party programme of 1931, the Turkish nation was defined as a "social and political community of citizens connected to one another through *language*, *culture* and *ideals*" (italics added for emphasis, quoted in Cagaptay 2006: 44).

The importance of this definition of a Turkish nation is two-fold. Firstly, it further strengthened the linguistic aspect of 'Turkishness'. That is, linguistic assimilation that was seen as desirable for the citizens of Turkey in the earlier period now became

officially necessary with this definition. This could be seen in this speech of Mustafa Kemal before the First Turkish History Congress in 1932:

> One, who regards himself as a member of the Turkish nation, should first of all and in every case, speak Turkish. If, someone, who does not speak Turkish, claims membership to Turkish culture and community, it would not be right to believe in this (quoted in Cagaptay 2004: 89).

This speech could also be read to suggest that the Kemalist ideology *did not* force its citizens to speak Turkish as it emphasizes "ascription" (Barth 1969): that is, if someone does not regard himself as a member of the Turkish nation, then he does not have to speak Turkish. After all, as was discussed earlier, there was a gap between citizenship and 'Turkishness'. At the practical level, however, speaking Turkish was not so much a matter of choice. Campaigns such as 'Citizen, Speak Turkish' that were specifically aimed non-Muslim citizens such as Jews, Greeks, and Armenians (Aslan 2007; Cagaptay 2006) suggest that even non-Muslim citizens of Turkey who were officially recognised as 'minorities' (hence, they were not expected to be a part of the 'nation') were expected to speak Turkish in the public space. Regarding Kurds, as they were ethnically 'invisible', they were assumed to be part of the Turkish nation and, hence, expected to speak exclusively in Turkish. As will be discussed shortly, the policies of the state in the 1930s reflected this expectation. The 'Citizen, Speak Turkish' campaign that started in 1927 towards the non-Muslim citizens was extended towards all ethnic groups by the mid-1930s, including Kurds. The following statement in 1938 outlines why Kurds were expected to speak Turkish: "To whom are we saying 'Citizen, Speak Turkish'? Who do we want this from?...The masses called Kurds – who speak Arabic- are the same as Turks" (quoted in Bayar 2011: 121). According to this understanding, Kurds, whose ethnicity was again disregarded, were simply Turks who speak Arabic[67] and had to be 'converted' into speaking Turkish.

Secondly, this definition of the Turkish nation strengthened the importance of 'culture and ideals' for 'Turkishness'. This is linked to the alphabet revolution of 1928, which increased the importance of the education system. The primary role of

[67] This suggests that Kurdish language was also invisible in the eyes of the Republican elites.

the education system was now to raise citizens devoted to the principles of the Kemalist ideology, the six main principles outlined earlier.

The 1930s, along with "the advent of High Kemalism" (Cagaptay 2006: 43), also saw the re-definition of 'Turkishness' along more ethnic lines. Within this framework, Kurds were seen as Turks who simply needed to be guided by the state to find their 'true ethnicity'. This paternalistic attitude of the state is reflected in this statement of Recep Peker, the secretary general of CHP, in 1931:

> We accept as part of us those citizens in the contemporary Turkish political and social community who have had the idea that they are Kurds, Circassians and even Lazes and Pomaks, imposed on them. *It is our duty to correct these false conceptions* [among them] (italics added for emphasis, quoted in Çağaptay 2002: 70).

The Kemalist ideology, then, in a way took on a "White Turkish Man's Burden in order to carry out a civilising mission on a supposedly backward and traditional Anatolian society" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 4), of which Kurds were part. As Westernisation/modernisation became a part of the official state rhetoric (Yegen 1999), Kurds, who were seen as 'anti-Western' and 'anti-modern', needed to be converted into 'ideal citizens of Turkey'.

The increasing emphasis on ethnicity and language in the formation of 'Turkishness' was manifested in two important official rhetoric acts of the Kemalist era of the 1930s. The Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory saw the "crystallisation of Turkish Orientalism" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 9).

3.1.2.1. Turkish History Thesis

In 1932, the Ministry of Education organised a workshop for high school and secondary school teachers to instruct them on teaching a history that was in line with the Kemalist principles of the nation-state. The First Turkish History Congress, as it was later called, saw the deliberate discussion of the Turkish History Thesis and provided its outline. In line with the primordialist accounts of nations, this Thesis emphasised the antiquity of the Turkish race. Turks, according to this Thesis, used to live in Central Asia thousands of years ago and, from there, moved in different

directions of the globe to "civilize the rest of the world" (Çağaptay 2002: 70). This was, as discussed earlier, an example of the paternalistic understanding of the Kemalist notion of 'Turkishness': it was a burden of the Turkish race to bring civilisation to the 'backwards people' in the rest of the world (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008: 9). The Thesis also reinforced the role of the Turkish language for the Turkish nation as the language that had "preserved the memories, cultural characteristics and everything else that made them a nation" (Çağaptay 2002: 70). This further increased the importance of the Turkish language for membership in the Turkish nation: as the Turkish language was the thing that preserved the nation, one had to speak Turkish to prove his or her ethnic Turkish descent (Çağaptay 2002: 70). Through this Thesis, it was easier to justify the policies of the nation-state: since Turks were the creators of all the great civilisations in all the lands to which they migrated, the current ethnic groups of Anatolia (including Kurds) were originally of Turkish ethnic origins. What the state was doing, then, according to the official rhetoric, was not assimilating those ethnic groups (since they were already Turks) but reminding them of their 'Turkishness' by imposing the Turkish language and Turkish culture upon them.

3.1.2.2. Sun Language Theory

Even though the scientific basis of the History Thesis was not established, it provided the justification for the Sun Language Theory. If Turks were the originators of all the great civilisations in the world, it would be natural to assume that the language they spoke at that time was also brought with them to the lands they emigrated. This, combined with the Orientalist mentality mentioned earlier, constituted the basis of the Sun Language Theory. The final form of the Sun Language Theory was approved in 1936 in the Third Turkish Language Congress. The main aim of this Theory was to show that "Turkish was the basic source of all cultural languages including the Ural-Altai, the Indo-European and the Semitic ones" (quoted in Çolak 2004: 83). The Congress was a showcase for presenting the Sun Language Theory to linguists and to Turcologists to receive their support for this argument. The result, however, was that

the scientific aspect of the Theory was questioned by the visiting scholars[68] and, as it lost its credibility in the international community, the earlier enthusiasm of the Republican elites regarding this Theory disappeared (Aytürk 2004).

Even though the enthusiasm was short-lived, it does not mean, however, that the Sun Language Theory did not have any impact. Combined with the Turkish History Thesis, these "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) of the Republican elites served to educate the upcoming generation about the ideals of the new Republic. These theses served to "instil in people an awareness of belonging to a great nation," and even though the scientific credibility of these theories was quickly dismissed, a whole generation was still educated according to the arguments of those theses (Aytürk 2004: 19). This helped strengthen the mentality that reinforced the superiority of a Turkish race and Turkish language. The adoption of the Resettlement Law in 1934 was another manifestation of this mentality.

3.1.2.3. Resettlement Law [*İskân Kanunu*]

The first instance of a law on resettlement was observed in 1926, when the Republican elites needed to regulate the influx of immigrants coming from Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. While defining who could be qualified as an immigrant, the Law stated that, "those who do not share the Turkish culture…will not be admitted as immigrants" (Çağaptay 2002: 71). According to this law, non-Muslim immigrants who were former citizens of Ottoman Empire were not allowed, whereas Muslim immigrants were welcome (Çağaptay 2002: 71). Religion, then, was one of the essential factors of Turkish culture. However, if being Muslim was enough to be considered an 'ideal Turk', then it would be expected that Kurds, who are predominantly Muslim, would be considered as such. The discussion so far suggests that this is not the case. The previous sections discussed that the Turkish language, according to the Republican elites, is also crucial to Turkish culture. This idea was further solidified in the resettlement law of 1934.

[68] One of the scientific guests at the Congress, Friedrich Giese, questioned the methodology of the Theory in these words: "What is the principle behind these studies? Are you depending on unambiguous proof, or are you proceeding by intuition? Although these are very interesting matters, one still needs to depend on a methodology. What is that methodology?" (quoted in Aytürk 2004: 18).

The Law of Resettlement of 1934 could be considered an extension of the understanding that resulted in the 'invention' of the Turkish History Thesis and Sun Language Theory. According to van Bruinessen, it was a "measure by which the authorities hoped to speed up the process of assimilation" (1994: 80). Firstly, it reconfirmed the criteria for the admission of immigrants into the Turkish state. Article 4 states that populations who do not belong to the Turkish culture, anarchists, spies, nomadic gypsies, and those who were expelled from the state are not allowed as *muhacir*s (cited in Beşikçi 1977: 135).[69] *Muhacir* is defined in the previous article as "settled or nomadic individuals or tribes migrating from abroad who belong to the Turkish race and settled individuals who belong to the Turkish culture." More importantly, and unlike the previous Resettlement Law, 'belonging to the Turkish culture' was more ambiguous, and deciding who belongs to the Turkish culture was left to the authorities (Article 3). In accordance with the emphasis Kemalist elites gave to ethnic ties during the 1930s, the Turkish word for 'race' [*ırk*] was mentioned frequently.

The proposal that was presented in the National Assembly in 1932 provides insight into the reasoning of the authorities. Talking about the structure within the Ottoman Empire, the proposal stated that the absolutism of the Empire based its existence on the co-existence of groups who do not assimilate into each other's cultures. "Due to the separate locations these groups were based in, even the *muhacir*s, who belonged to the Turkish race, could not mingle with their fellow Turks" (cited in Beşikçi 1977: 156).[70] Through this "population engineering" (Cagaptay 2006: 88), the aim was the conversion of those groups who were considered 'unsuitable' into 'proper Turks'.

The Law divided the lands of Turkey into three different zones. Zone 1 consisted of the lands into which "the populations who share the Turkish culture" (Cagaptay 2006: 88) were to be resettled. By relocating the populations who belong to the Turkish culture there, it aimed to have a concentration of "high culture" (Gellner

[69] The original version of the whole law in Turkish is given in İsmail Beşikçi's *Kürtlerin 'Mecburi İskan'ı* (1977). While translating to English, I tried to stay true to its original wording as much as possible.
[70] The original version of this proposal in Turkish is given in İsmail Beşikçi's *Kürtlerin 'Mecburi İskan'ı* (1977). While translating, I tried to stay true to its original wording as much as possible.

1983) in these lands.[71] Zone 2 was for "the relocation and resettlement of populations which are to adopt the Turkish culture" (Cagaptay 2006: 88). This was the Western regions of Turkey, specifically the Aegean, Marmara, Mediterranean and the Thrace (Beşikçi 1977: 133). This means that groups who were required to adopt Turkish culture were going to be resettled into the Western part of Turkey. Zone 3, which was located in Eastern Turkey (Beşikçi 1977: 133), would be "closed to resettlement and habitation due to sanitary, economic, cultural, political, military, and security reasons" (Cagaptay 2006: 88). The arrangement of these zones and the phrases that were used in the Law such as "tribal populations that do not speak Turkish" (Cagaptay 2006: 89) suggest that Kurds were the main focus of this Law.

Not only was the relocation and the resettlement of "those populations who do not belong to the Turkish culture"[72] necessary, but it was also forbidden for those groups to form groups in the new places they moved. Article 11 of the Law clearly illustrates this:

> Those whose mother tongue is not Turkish will not be allowed to establish as a group new villages or wards, workers' or artisans' associations, nor will such persons be allowed to reserve an existing village, ward, enterprise or workshop for members of the same race (quoted in van Bruinessen 1994: 80).

This article reaffirms the argument that, for Republican elites, the Turkish language was an essential feature of Turkish culture.

3.1.3. Summary of the Kemalist Rhetoric

The discussion in this chapter so far presents the most important policies that were adopted by the Kemalist leaders during the 1920s and the 1930s. Before discussing some of the instances in which 'Kurdishness' was manifested during this period, a summary of the main features of Kemalist rhetoric is presented below.

Before the establishment of the Republic and during its early years, the rhetoric Mustafa Kemal used, emphasising Islam as a common bond, implied the

[71] According to Beşikçi (1977), this is the area that is referred to as 'Northern Kurdistan', which is the part of Kurdistan that is located within the borders of the Turkish state (Southeast Turkey).
[72] Note that the word 'Kurd' has never been mentioned by the elites and the word 'population' was used instead, suggesting, again, the ethnic invisibility of Kurds in the Kemalist rhetoric.

acknowledgement of Kurds as a separate ethnic group. However, this rhetoric started to change after the Republic was established. The emphasis that Republican elites put on modernisation/Westernisation necessitated homogenisation of the nation-state. This is similar to Gellner's theory of modernisation, yet the discussion in this chapter emphasises the actions of the elites instead of Gellner's functionalist forces. Secularism, one of the six main principles Kemalist rhetoric is based on, provided the necessary justification for diminishing the importance of the common bond that had existed between the Turks and Kurds: Islam. Özbudun (1998) notes that the word 'Muslims' is not mentioned in the Republican texts after 1924 when addressing public.

Apart from secularism, modernisation/Westernisation and the Turkish language were also seen as the requirements of becoming 'the ideal Turk'. For that purpose, the rhetoric of the nation-state targeted those groups who were seen as 'backwards' and who spoke a language other than Turkish. Kurds fitted this description in the minds of the Republican elites. Kurds, according to the Kemalist rhetoric, were Turks who had forgotten their identity. The definition of the word 'Kurd' in the 1936 state-published Turkish dictionary is given as the "name given to a group or a member of this group of *Turkish origin*, many who have changed their language, speaking a broken form of Persian and lives in Turkey, Iraq, Iran" (italics added for emphasis, cited in Zeydanlıoğlu 2008). Herein lies the paradox of Kemalist rhetoric: if Kurds were already of Turkish origins,[73] then why would it be necessary to Turkify this group of people (van Bruinessen 1994; Zeydanlıoğlu 2008)? The concept of 'the ideal Turk', however, provides a partial explanation for this puzzle. Kurds were "mountain Turks" (van Bruinessen 1994: 79) who had forgotten their identity but still needed to be modernised/Westernised – and needed to be reminded of their original language, which was Turkish. Therefore, for the Turkish state, this process was not one of 'Turkification'; it was a "Kemalist civilising mission" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008) that was necessary to create 'the ideal citizens' for the Republic.

For the purposes of this research, then, what is essential to emphasise is that secularism, modernisation/Westernisation, and the Turkish language were the main

[73] This was not only restricted to Kurds. As was discussed earlier, the Turkish History Thesis, 'invented' by the Republican elites, argued that Turks were the origins of all the great civilisations.

characteristics of the Kemalist rhetoric. As this research is interested in the influence of state rhetoric on how 'Kurdishness' is manifested, the following section will discuss some of the main instances of manifestations of 'Kurdishness' during this period. In that sense, it will also prepare for the discussion in Chapter 4, where the role that state rhetoric plays on 'Kurdishness' will continue to be discussed.

3.2. Manifestations of 'Kurdishness' Under Kemalist Rhetoric

As was discussed in the beginning of this chapter, Kurds were unified with Turks against enemies during the Independence War under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. With the change in rhetoric after the establishment of the Republic, however, the nature of the relationship was modified. This section will focus on two instances of 'Kurdishness' exhibited during the Kemalist period of the Republic: the Sheikh Said Revolt of 1925[74] and the Dersim events of 1937-38. The reason for focusing on these two instances is that the former marks the first public manifestation of 'Kurdishness' against the newly-established Republic and the latter marks the end of these public manifestations until the beginning of the 1970s, when PKK was established.

3.2.1. Sheikh Said Revolt

To understand the context of how this revolt started, one has to take into account the influence of the sheikhs on Kurdish society. Within the de-centralised nature of Kurdish society, sheikhs were the figures who "restored order among Kurdish tribes" (Yeğen 1996: 219). In addition to that, however, sheikhs were also 'more-than-religious' figures within their respective tribes and acted more like a "mediator between the religion of Islam and the Kurdish nationalism" (Yeğen 1996: 220). In fact, according to Tucker, "it must be appreciated that for the Kurds nationalism and religion became intertwined, in effect, from the beginning" (1989: xvii).

[74] The wording regarding this incident is varied within the literature. McDowall (1996) explains it through the use of the word 'revolt', while some others have used the word 'rebellion' (Olson 1989; van Bruinessen 1991; Yeğen 1996; Heper 2007) and 'uprising' (Cagaptay 2006). Within the academic literature in Turkish, this incident is known as *Şeyh Sait İsyanı*.

The Kemalist elites' rhetoric emphasising secularism, therefore, meant the introduction of a new order for some Kurdish tribes. The closing down of *medrese*s were the first blow for some of the Kurdish tribes. Sheikh Said, who had a great deal of charisma and influence over his followers, stated this in one of his speeches before the Revolt:

> The *medrese*s, where people learn their religion and gain spiritual knowledge [*irfan*] were closed…Newspapers openly insult our religion…Our beloved Prophet is defamed…[Under the circumstances] Muslims are obliged to defend their faith. If I had the physical ability, I would grab a weapon, gird on a sword, and start the fighting for my religion (quoted in Heper 2007: 149).

The removal of the *medrese*s was crucial for Kurds also for more practical reasons. In a society in which religion plays a major role, the religious schools were the primary places of education for most Kurds. By cutting this source of education, the Republican elites, in a sense, were implementing Gellner's ideas about the role of the education system within nation-states. The abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924 by the Republican elites was the final blow for the tribes that felt a loyalty to the Caliphate. This weakened the common bond between Kurds and Turks and made Kurds conscious of their positioning within the newly-established state. This could be observed in Sheikh Said's letter to the other Sheikhs:

> Earlier, we had a common Caliphate, and this gave to our religious people a deep feeling of being a part of the community that the Turks also belonged to. Since the abolition of the Caliphate, *the only thing we are left with is Turkish repression* [italics added for emphasis] (quoted in Bozarslan 2003: 180).

The Caliphate also provided structure for a society that was otherwise dominated by different tribes and religious groups. It provided a sense of unity for Muslims and it "allowed space for diverse loyalties and local autonomy for the periphery" (Yavuz 2001: 7). The abolishment of the Caliphate, then, was seen by sheikhs and by religious groups as an attempt at suppression by the state. The very groups that collaborated with Mustafa Kemal during the Independence War against their common enemies now started seeing the Turkish state as the enemy. In a way, Mustafa Kemal and his friends, by abolishing the religious institutions, "now made enemies of the very Kurds who had helped Turkey survive the years of trial" (McDowall 1996: 192). This suggests that it was not Mustafa Kemal and the

Kemalist leaders *per se* but the rhetoric of these leaders that had an influence on the emergence of this revolt.

The revolt, then, could be interpreted not as a mere ethnic conflict, but as a revolt against the very basic principles Kemalist rhetoric was trying to incorporate within the nation-state. It emerged as a reaction against the policies of *centralisation* and *secularism* combined with ethno-nationalist sentiments: Sheikh Said issued "a manifesto in favour of a Kurdish government and the restoration of the Caliphate" (McDowall 1996: 194), yet the fact that he announced a non-Kurd for the throne of a proposed Kurdistan suggests that ethno-nationalist sentiments were not the only factors contributing to the rise of this revolt.[75] The grandson of Sheikh Said, Abdülmelik Fırat, also describes his grandfather as "a religious man without nationalist feelings" (quoted in Aras 2014: 49). The rebellion was a reaction against the establishment of a new, centralised, and secular order by the Turkish state in order to restore the old order that was based on anti-central and anti-secular Kurdish tribes.

The suppression of the revolt in the provinces of Diyarbakır and Elazığ required some brutal measures by the government. Independence Tribunals [*İstiklâl Mahkemeleri*], which had "special powers and no appeals" (Cagaptay 2006: 22), were established to achieve this aim. In April 1925, Sheikh Said and his followers were captured by the government and were executed after a trial in the Tribunals.

Even though the rebellion at the end could not achieve its aim of establishing an independent Kurdistan under the leadership of the Caliphate, it managed to leave its legacy on the subsequent policies of the Kemalist elites. First of all, the rebellion was seen by the Republican elites as a plot by *some bandits* to overthrow the government and to tempt the 'poor people' who could easily be deceived by the actions of these bandits. This mentality could be observed in this statement by the chairman of the Independence Tribunals, which sentenced the leaders of the rebellion to death:

> Everybody must know that as the young Republican government will definitely not condone any cursed action like incitement and political reaction, it will prevent this sort of banditry by means of its precise precautions. *The poor*

[75] For other interpretations and analyses of this rebellion, see Olson (1989) and van Bruinessen (1992), who describe this rebellion as a national one.

> *people of this region who have been exploited and oppressed under the domination of sheikhs and feudal landlords* will be freed from your incitements and evil and they will follow the efficient paths of our Republic which promises progress and prosperity (italics added for emphasis, cited in Yegen 1999: 560).

This statement reflects the paternalistic attitude of the Kemalist elites towards Kurds and the anti-central, anti-secular structure of their society. In line with the concept of 'the ideal Turk', the elites saw Kurds as a people who must be civilised, and the biggest obstacle in their way to civilisation was sheikhs and religious leaders. Mustafa Kemal, in his famous speech in 1927, emphasised this point by asking this question: "Could a civilised nation tolerate a mass of people who let themselves be led by the nose by a herd of shaykhs, dedes, sayyids, chelebis, babas and amirs?" (quoted in McDowall 1996: 196). As Kemalist rhetoric was based on modernisation/Westernisation and secularisation, any group of people who felt loyal to anti-Western and anti-secular institutions would be considered 'traitors' and needed to be shown 'the right way' of being an 'ideal Turk'. The most important consequence of the Sheikh Said revolt was perhaps, then, that it provided a justification for the newly-established state to intensify its policies of secularisation and Westernisation. It also had an impact on the idea that Kurds needed to be relocated and resettled to prevent the possible future uprisings, which was manifested in the implementation of the Resettlement Laws of 1926 and 1934. Metin Heper (2007) argues that the scholars who adhere to the dominant paradigm on the Kurdish issue in Turkey[76] suggest that "all Kurdish rebellions had an ethnic motive behind them" (2007: 145). The discussion in this session aimed to show that it was more than ethno-nationalist motives that were behind the most important rebellion against the state during the early Republican period. The Sheikh Said rebellion was the result of a combination of ethnic, religious, and tribal motives in accordance with the changes that the Kemalist rhetoric brought to society.

3.2.2. The Dersim Uprising

[76] As was discussed in Chapter 1, Heper positions himself within the 'alternative paradigm' with regards to the Kurdish issue in Turkey, which would suggest that the starting point of the 'troubles', as Heper calls it, is when "Kurds, or rather some militants thereof, who for one reason or another but not for ethnic reasons, became dissatisfied with the pattern of relations they have had with the state" (2007: 11).

The wording regarding the incidents in Dersim in 1937-38 also warrants attention. Starting as an "uprising" (Cagaptay 2006) or as a "rebellion" (Hallı 1972), it later turned into a "genocide" (Beşikçi 1990;[77] van Bruinessen 1994).

Similar to the rhetoric used as a reaction to the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the rhetoric that the Republican elites used concerning the area of Dersim again demonstrated "the civilising mission" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008) of the Turkish state. The invisibility of the Kurdish ethnicity could again be observed in the Kemalist rhetoric, so much so that the interior minister at the time, Şükrü Kaya, described the region as "comprising a purely Turkish population" (quoted in McDowall 1996: 208). Through the Resettlement Laws of 1926 and 1934, the areas predominantly populated by Kurds were under state control, but Dersim was "the last part of Turkey that had not been effectively brought under central government control" (van Bruinessen 1994: 71). For this purpose, the National Assembly passed the Tunceli Law in 1935. The Interior Minister explained the Republic's main goal through this law was "to establish within this zone the civilized organization enjoyed by the country as whole" (quoted in Cagaptay 2006: 111). Through this law, the name 'Dersim' was also officially changed to the Turkish name 'Tunceli'.[78]

Since, according to the Kemalist rhetoric, the people of Dersim were Turks, the justification of this law was again based on the 'civilising' rhetoric. One of the inspectors for the civil service, Hamdi Bey, stated his observations of the people of Dersim in 1926 with the use of words such as 'ignorance' [*cehalet*], 'poverty' [*geçim darlığı*], and 'a leaning towards Kurdishness' [*Kürtlük eğilimleri*]. To him, since the people living there had these characteristics, they could easily be 'fooled' by the likes of *reis*, sheikhs, *bey*s, and *agha*s (Hallı 1972: 25-26).[79] In a way, 'Kurdishness' in the Republican rhetoric was associated with being 'ignorant', 'backwards', 'tribal', and 'anti-central', which was in contrast to the Republican ideals. The rhetoric Ankara used, then, was a mix of modernisation, centralisation, and de-feudalisation

[77] Beşikçi (1990) uses the Turkish word *jenosid* to describe the incidents.
[78] Geographically, Dersim was the name of the district and Tunceli was given to the name of the new province including the district of Dersim. However, today, the political connotation of those two names still remains. As the data in the upcoming chapters reveal, even though the official name is still Tunceli, Kurds still refer to that area as 'Dersim' and people who are loyal to the principles of the Kemalist state use the word 'Tunceli'.
[79] This is my translation from Turkish. The whole report of the Inspector can be read in Turkish in Hallı (1972).

(Cagaptay 2006: 111). With the Tunceli Law, an Inspectorate-General was established in the province of Tunceli in 1936. Through this Inspectorate, the area of Dersim and the province of Tunceli would feel the power of the central government and maybe this way, the government in Ankara thought, Dersim could be tamed (Cagaptay 2006: 110).

The uprising started, then, as a resistance against this presence of the central government in the area of Dersim. This was reflected in an ultimatum that a federation of tribes sent to the government, which stated that "no posts of troops or gendarmerie should be established in the Dersim, that no bridges should be built, that no administrative units should be organized," adding that they "should continue to meet their taxes, as in the past, through bargaining on the part of their chiefs" (quoted in Cagaptay 2006: 111). In 1937, it turned into a "war" (Dersimi 1952) between the military forces of the state and the people of Dersim. The military operations, which saw thousands of civilians killed, thousands of notables deported, and the villages totally burnt down and destroyed,[80] lasted until 1938.

The importance of the Dersim events is two-fold: firstly, it marked "the end of the 'tribal' revolts against the Kemalist state" (McDowall 1996: 209). The military operations were so brutally effective that it took a couple of decades for the next significant Kurdish movement, under the name of PKK, to emerge. However, the immediate effect of the operations was visible in the region. Professor von der Osten, a German archaeologist who was travelling through the region in 1938, described the region in these words:

> The Kurds…are generally abandoning their nomadic mode of life and settling in villages, have come to take pride in considering themselves citizens of Turkey, frequently intermarry with the Turkish population, send their children to the Government schools, and have come to constitute a loyal and law-abiding element in the population (quoted in Cagaptay 2006: 113).

This observation draws a picture of a Kemalist state that achieved its aim of making Kurds 'ideal citizens' of the Republic. After 15 years of Kemalist rule, it finally seemed that Kurds were becoming "obedient yet inactive members of the republic" (Cagaptay 2006: 113), just like the Republic wanted.

[80] Nuri Dersimi (1952), in his detailed account of Dersim history, describes a poisonous gas that was thrown by the air forces of the state (1952: 319).

Secondly, the military operations in Dersim also revealed the pragmatism [*pragmatizm*] (Beşikçi 1990) of Kemalist ideology. The invisibility of ethnicity within the Kemalist rhetoric required that Kurds were 'mountain Turks' who had forgotten their identity, their language, and their culture. This was manifested in one of the written texts on the official newspaper of the state, *Ulus*, after the Tunceli Law was passed in the National Assembly:

> Dersim is pure Turk [*öz Türk*]. The people are poor. The aghas, who hide in the caves, in the mountains, and at the cliff sides, are the last feudal lords of Anatolia. The people are their slave…Anatolia has witnessed, perhaps for the first time in its history, tranquillity and unity [*sükun ve birlik*] during the Republic of Atatürk. From time to time, it has been necessary to take radical measures. Today, it is time to do this for the province of Tunceli (quoted in Beşikçi 1990: 47).[81]

When a full military operation started for Dersim, however, it was necessary to justify the actions of the government. During the Sheikh Said Revolt, justification was found in the fact that the rebels were traitors to the new, secular Republic who wanted to bring the Caliphate back and, therefore, needed to be eliminated. The killing of civilians (meaning 'non-sheikhs', 'non-aghas', and the people who were their followers) in Dersim was justified by emphasising the ethnicity of the people. When operations continued in Dersim, another newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, published a column by Mazhar Aren stating: "Some people think that people from Dersim [*Dersimliler*] are Turks. And I do never think that they are Turks. A Turk cannot have the attributes of nomadism [*bedevilik*], primitiveness [*iptidailik*], brutality [vahşet], mercilessness [*merhametsizlik*], and barbarism [*kan içicilik*]" (quoted in Beşikçi 1990: 48).[82] This statement is different from the paternalistic approach shown earlier by the Republican elites. Republican elites, carrying "the white Turkish man's burden" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008), thought they had to bring 'civilisation' to the areas where 'poor people' live. In a way, their explanation for their actions was that they wanted to bring those people to the same level as that of 'the ideal citizens'. The above statement, however, was the justification for the complete elimination of Kurds. By categorising Kurds as 'barbaric,' 'nomadic', 'primitive', and 'brutal', the Kemalist elites emphasised the fact they are not any of these and placed themselves

[81] This is my translation from Turkish. The original text can be read in Beşikçi (1990: 47-48).
[82] This is my translation from Turkish. The original text can be read in Beşikçi (1990: 48-49).

in the opposite position. Through this othering process, the Kemalist elites re-constructed 'Turkishness' as something 'civilised', 'progressive', and all those other things that Kurds were, supposedly, not.

3.3. Post-Kemalist Era and the PKK

The suppression of the Dersim uprising was effective for the Republican elites in the sense that Kurdish Movement remained quiet for a while. The Kemalist era officially ended in 1950, when the Democrat Party won the elections with a landslide victory. Following the military coup in 1960, a new constitution was ratified in 1961. Even though this was a constitution that was promulgated by the military officers, it was a relatively liberal constitution that created a free environment in Turkey allowing the development of both Left and Right ideologies (Heper and Keyman 1998; van Bruinessen 1984). This made possible the establishment of some movements within Leftist groups that took an interest in the Kurdish Question of Turkey.[83] Within this environment, Kurdish intellectuals started replacing tribal and religious leaders, which resulted in "secularisation of the Kurdish Question" (Yavuz 2001: 9). Even though the 1970s saw the Left movement dominated by Kurds and the issue of the Kurdish Question (Yavuz 2001: 9), those discussions took place without even mentioning the word 'Kurd' (van Bruinessen 1984: 228). The invisibility of the word 'Kurd' could be witnessed when a cabinet minister, Şerafettin Elçi, caused a scandal by publicly declaring himself a Kurd (Yavuz 2001: 10). The martial law that was declared in 13 cities in 1978[84] and the following military coup of 1980 closed down all political groups, associations and organisations.

It is the liberal environment of the 1960 and the 1970s that the PKK had its roots in. Many Kurdish intellectuals were involved with the Worker's Party of the 1960s (Al 2015a: 98). Abdullah Öcalan himself, the founder of the PKK, had Marxist ideals and when he established the PKK in 1978, his main goal was to "create a socialist

[83] Van Bruinessen (1984) discusses in detail the different groups and organisations in the 1960s that emerged both within the Turkish and Kurdish Left.
[84] The martial law of 1978 was announced in the Official Gazzette on 26 December 1978 http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/16501_1.pdf&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/16501_1.pdf [Accessed 03 August 2015].

pan-Kurdish state" (Yavuz 2001: 12).[85] The PKK started its military activities in 1984, which started the fight against the Turkish state. As the opening anecdote of this thesis showed, even until the late 1990s, there were restrictions with regards to the rights of Kurds. However, the impact of the PKK on the Kurdish Movement cannot be denied as no other Kurdish organisation has managed to capture "the mind and the resources of the Kurds as much as the PKK" (Yavuz 2001: 10). The most important contribution of the PKK to the Kurdish movement has been that it has created space within the movement for "the middle class and urbanized Kurdish youth" (Yavuz 2001: 11), as opposed to the earlier periods of being dominated by religious and tribal leaders. In this sense, while PKK and its activities are not the main focus of this thesis, its contribution to the transformation of 'Kurdishness' should be acknowledged.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter started the discussion on the relationship between manifestations of 'Kurdishness' and state rhetoric. For this purpose, it first looked at the rhetoric that was established and solidified during the Kemalist period of the Turkish state. This period was a transition of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multilingual Empire into a secular, modern, central, and monolingual nation-state.

The period before the establishment of the Republic shows collaboration between Turks and Kurds in fighting their common enemies together during the Independence War. This period also saw the recognition of Kurds as a separate ethnic group and the acknowledgment of them as the 'brothers' of Turks through the bond of Islam. The use of Islam as a common bond between Turks and Kurds would be dominant in state rhetoric almost 70 years later, as will be discussed in the next chapter. After the establishment of the Republic, the Republican elites constructed 'Turkishness' based on the ideals of 'Westernisation/modernisation', 'secularism', and 'centralisation'. For Kurds, this meant that their ethnicity was invisible in the state rhetoric and they

[85] Al (2015a) discusses the transformation of PKK's vision from an independent Kurdistan into demands for a pluralist Turkey.

needed the further guidance of the state and of the Republican elites to reach the level of civilisation of 'the ideal Turk'.

The period of "High Kemalism" (Cagaptay 2006) showed more emphasis on the ethnic aspect of 'Turkishness'. Through the Turkish History Thesis and the Sun Language Theory, 'Turkishness' was being built upon the elements of ethnicity and language. The second part of the chapter focused on the two most important instances of 'Kurdishness' during the Kemalist period: the Sheikh Said Revolt and Dersim uprising. Both these manifestations included ethnic, religious, and tribal elements, which suggest the influence of the Kemalist rhetoric on shaping these forms of 'Kurdishness'.

Chapter 4 will continue the discussion of the role state rhetoric plays in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested by focusing on the current period of AKP, the second 'moment of transition' in the history of the Republic. As will be discussed, the emphasis on secularism has significantly changed during the AKP period, yet the emphasis on centralisation and on the Turkish language has remained significantly the same. Through the fieldwork data, it will show that forms of 'Kurdishness' have been (re-)shaped according to these changes and continuities within state rhetoric.

4. SECOND 'MOMENT OF TRANSITION': PUTTING RELIGION INTO STATE RHETORIC

The discussion in the previous chapter focused on state rhetoric during the early Republican period, the first of the two 'moments of transition' that this research focuses on. It was argued that the way the newly-established Republic constructed 'Turkishness' has affected the way 'Kurdishness' was constructed and, through this interaction, the boundaries between 'Kurdishness' and 'Turkishness' were solidified. This chapter will continue with the discussion on the 'state-led' aspect of 'Kurdishness' by focusing on recent changes and continuities within state rhetoric.

The rule of AKP that started in 2002 brought about some changes within state rhetoric. This chapter questions the ways those changes, which will be discussed throughout the first part of the chapter, influence different manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. By focusing on different principles in its official ideology, AKP has differentiated itself from the official ideology of the state that had prevailed previously. In Chapter 3, the importance of the principle of secularism in the establishment of the Kemalist ideology was discussed. The construction of a 'Turkishness' based on the ideals of 'Westernisation/modernisation', 'secularism' and 'centralisation' provided the framework of 'the ideal Turk' into which Kurds were expected to fit. What happens, though, when one of those principles – secularism - no longer carries the same importance? The first part of this chapter will focus on the changes in state rhetoric throughout the rule of AKP by analysing party programmes, speeches, and statements by AKP leaders. The comparison between the Kemalist rhetoric and the AKP rhetoric will be discussed in the context of this analysis. The aim of this discussion is to show why the AKP period is considered another 'moment of transition' for the Turkish state.

The second part of the chapter will focus on fieldwork data and show two of the ways through which 'Kurdishness', in its current form, is exhibited by the respondents. It will be shown through the interview data and field notes that 'Kurdishness', in its current form, is manifested through two main demands: education in mother tongue and self-determination. This is a different form of 'Kurdishness' than the one during the early Republican period. The aim of this

chapter is to show that one of the reasons for this shift is a state rhetoric that now prioritises Islam, which allows the emergence of ethnic categories other than 'Turkishness'. The emphasis given to language and centralisation, however, has remained the same. This chapter will conclude by arguing that the changes that emerged within the state rhetoric during the AKP period, as well as continuities within the state rhetoric, have influenced the transformation of 'Kurdishness'. It is again necessary to emphasise that, as was the case with Chapter 3, state rhetoric that is discussed in this chapter is the party rhetoric. The reason for equalling the party rhetoric to state rhetoric is that AKP has always formed a majority government since its establishment in 2001 and hence, has been the only party that has shaped the state rhetoric since the elections in 2002.

4.1. The AKP Rhetoric

4.1.1. Rhetoric in Transition (2002-2007)

The elections in 2002 saw AKP come to power, having won 34 per cent of the total votes. Chapter 3 discussed the essential principles of the Kemalist ideology on which the Republic was founded. The military, which has always seen itself as the bedrock of the Kemalist state (Hale and Özbudun 2010: 80), has been the vanguard of secularism, which has been arguably *the* most essential principle of the Turkish state. Chapter 3 showed that the Kemalist state's emphasis on secularism provided one of the frameworks through which an 'ideal Turk' could be constructed. As a result, religion was one of the ways through which 'Kurdishness' during that period was manifested. The success of the early-period (2002-2007) AKP lies in its rhetoric, which managed to unite Islamists, liberal intelligentsia and the different ethnic groups such as Kurds and Alevis who were equally critical of Republican ideals and principles (Aktürk 2012; Hale and Özbudun 2010). Kurdish support for AKP in the November 2002 elections could be observed in the votes coming from the regions with predominantly Kurdish populations (see Table 4.1). The votes in the Southeastern region of Turkey were split between AKP and DEHAP, the then-pro-Kurdish party.

An analysis of AKP's party programme, describing itself as 'conservative democrat', reveals the crucial difference of AKP both from the previous Islamic parties and from CHP. As mentioned earlier, the key to the AKP victory was gathering groups from different backgrounds under one single rhetoric. The most important example of this is manifested in the party programme under the subheading 'Fundamental Rights and Freedoms':

> Our party considers religion as one of the most important institutions of the humanity, and secularism as a pre-requisite of democracy, and an assurance of the freedom of religion and conscience. It also rejects the interpretation and distortion of secularism as an enmity against religion.[86]

This attempt to combine religion with the most important principle of the Turkish nation-state, secularism, has modified state priorities. Establishing religion as an important part of human lives whilst, at the same time, acknowledging the principle of secularism represents a major change from the Kemalist rhetoric. It was also a different kind of secularism that was officially recognised in AKP's programme. The following article on secularism offers the explanation of AKP's interpretation of secularism:

> Secularism is a principle which allows people of all religions, and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organise their lives along these lines. From this point of view, secularism is a principle of freedom and social peace.[87]

[86] The full text in English can be found at http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_ (Section 2.1) [Accessed 07 January 2015].
[87] http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_(Section 2.1) [Accessed 07 January 2015].

Province	AKP (%)	DEHAP (%)
Gaziantep	**40.04**	8.00
Diyarbakır	15.96	**56.13**
Şanlıurfa	**22.90**	19.28
Batman	20.62	**47.10**
Adıyaman	**41.42**	11.97
Siirt*	**84.82**	----
Mardin	15.43	**39.58**
Kilis	**36.39**	2.26
Şırnak	14.02	**45.94**

*The elections in Siirt had to be rerun with the only two parties that passed the threshold of 10%, AKP and CHP, allowed to participate.

Table 4.1. 2002 General Election Results in 9 Provinces of Southeast Anatolian Region. Source: http://www.haberturk.com/secim2002 [Accessed 17 July 2015].

These two articles on the relationship between secularism and religion suggest that AKP, whilst officially acknowledging secularism as one of its principles, has a different attitude towards secularism than the previous state ideology. The Kemalist ideology holds secularism as one of its main principles and religion, for the maintenance of the secularist ideology, had to be removed from public space (Chapter 3), whilst for AKP, secularism was the basic means through which religion could be protected. In that sense, *secularism, for Kemalism, was the end, whereas, for AKP, it was the means.*

The former leader and founder of AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,[88] was a former student of Necmettin Erbakan,[89] the leader of the RP that was closed down by the

[88] At the time of writing, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the first publicly-elected President of Turkey following the presidential elections on 10 August 2014 and has since officially dissociated himself from any political party.

Constitutional Court in 1998 due to anti-secular activities. AKP's approach to secularism could be inspired by Erbakan's view on secularism. For Erbakan, secularism should mean 'freedom of religion' and freedom of conscience should mean 'the right to live according to one's beliefs' (Hale and Özbudun 2010: 7-8). AKP's view on secularism is a reflection of this type of secularism, yet it has stayed rather modest (at least in its earlier period) compared to Erbakan's visions. One of the most ambitious visions of Erbakan was to create a society with 'legal pluralism', where "more than one legal system operates simultaneously and each citizen has the right freely to choose the legal system of his preference" (Yayla 1997). This vision was influenced by the Medina Contract of Prophet Muhammad, who managed to establish a Muslim society in Medina whilst, at the same time, also guaranteeing the rights of Jews and Christians living there (Bulaç 1993; Ege 1993; Hale and Özbudun 2010; Yayla 1997). This move, clearly in conflict with the constitutionally-secured secular principle of the state, could be interpreted as one of the main reasons that led to the closing down of RP. Erdoğan's statements from his previous political life draw resemblance to Erbakan's views; in 1993, when Erdoğan was an MP for RP, he stated:

> It is not possible to be both secular and a Muslim. You have to be either secular or a Muslim. To be both secular and a Muslim is like being the opposite ends of a magnet…Why? Because the sovereignty of a Muslim belongs solely and absolutely to Allah, Who is the creator of the Muslim. 'Sovereignty is vested fully and unconditionally in the nation'[90] is a lie.[91]

A newly-elected party, like AKP was in 2002, could not afford to make such bold moves if it wanted to establish its authority in the political arena. When the party was first established the previous year, Erdoğan was insistent on his loyalty to the secular characteristics of the Turkish state and assured the people who were questioning his intentions that he and his party were not going to build a state based on Sharia (*Milliyet* 13 September 2001). Yet, AKP also managed to put forward a different

[89] He was briefly discussed in the Introduction. His party, RP, emerged victorious in the general elections of 1995 and was part of a coalition government that lasted briefly until 1997, when the party was forced to resign by the military forces.
[90] This is a famous saying of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and it is also written on the wall of the Grand National Assembly. Article 6 of Turkish Constitution begins with this sentence.
[91] This is my translation from Turkish. The Turkish version of this speech can be found online in this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5XgqU50c_Y [Accessed 07 January 2015].

understanding of secularism compared to CHP's rhetoric, as was suggested by the above statements in the party programme.

Contrasting this to CHP's party programme might illuminate this further. The official programme of CHP does not specifically mention religion as one of the important institutions of humanity, and instead states the six principles of Atatürk as the basis of its policies, one of which is secularism. It defines secularism in these words:

> …[CHP] absolutely opposes religion being taken advantage of by politics. It does not accept the politicisation of religion, nor the religionisation of politics. The state is neutral to religions and beliefs. The state has no religion. *Religion is the subject of private life, instead of public life* (my translation, italics added for emphasis).[92]

The key difference between these two definitions of secularism is the fact that Kemalist ideology strictly defends the restriction of religion and all its expressions to private life, while AKP, by stating that secularism is all about freedom and social peace, maintains a different understanding of it. This difference could be explained as different types of secularism: passive and assertive secularism (Kuru 2007). Assertive secularism means that the state "plays an 'assertive' role as the agent of a social engineering project that confines religion to the private domain," whereas passive secularism "allows for the public visibility of religion" (Kuru 2007: 571). The AKP, the representative of passive secularism, has differed from the Kemalist vision and its decades-long ideology of assertive secularism. This remains a small, yet significant, change in state rhetoric.

The argument in 2007 between Bülent Çakır, the Parliament Speaker at that time, and Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the then-President of Turkey, is an example of how crucial the definition of secularism is for both AKP and the Kemalists.[93] Arınç suggested that

[92] http://www.chp.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/chpprogram.pdf [Accessed 08 January 2015].

[93] Ahmet Necdet Sezer, who served as the President of Turkey from 2000 to 2007, was known for being a staunch defender of the Kemalist ideology and this had resulted in many conflicts with AKP on several occasions. Erdoğan even stated that he "suffered a lot from Sezer during his presidency" (*Haber 7* 17 April 2014). Sezer stated near the end of his ruling period that should AKP's presidential candidate succeed him, it would be the biggest danger for the political regime in Turkey since the founding of the Republic and "the activities aimed against the secular order and efforts to bring religion into politics are raising social tensions" (*Reuters* 13 April 2007).

one should take a look at the legal grounds of the second article in the Constitution[94] since the definition of secularism is not in the Constitution. Sezer opposed this by stating that the definition of secularism is clear in the Constitution and that it would be against the Constitution to define secularism by departing from the legal ground of an article and continued that "secularism does not mean freedom of religion and conscience" (*Zaman* 06 February 2007); this argument is clearly in conflict with the type of secularism AKP wanted to endorse.

It is no surprise, then, that scholars interpreted AKP's coming to power as a "'counterelites' representing constituencies with ethnically specific grievances" (Aktürk 2012: 5), "a victory of 'periphery' over 'centre'"[95] (Şen 2010: 60), and scholars further question whether AKP's politics could be interpreted as the continuation of the ideology of Political Islam (Heper and Toktaş 2003; Kalaycıoğlu 2010; Saraçoğlu and Demirkol 2014; Somer 2007). What is relevant for the purposes of this chapter is to understand the ways in which these changes within state rhetoric influenced the manifestation(s) of 'Kurdishness'.

The first breakthrough in policies regarding different ethnic groups came in June 2004, when *TRT 3*, the state-funded TV channel, started broadcasting in five different languages spoken by different ethnic groups in Turkey (Bosnian, Arabic, Kurdish, Circassian, and Zaza) at certain hours for the first time in Republican history. The CEO of TRT at the time, Şenol Demiröz, explained that this decision was in accordance with the principles of the nation-state and within the principles set out in Article 2 of the Constitution (*Milliyet* 05 June 2004). As mentioned in the Introduction, the political context of that period with regards to the negotiations with the EU might have an impact on the passing of these reforms by the Parliament. After all, it was still the "golden age of Europeanization in Turkey" (Öniş 2008). However, even then, this was a small but an important step that signified the reforms on a bigger scale for the future.

[94] The second article of the Turkish Constitution defines the characteristics of the Republic and confirms that the Turkish state is a democratic, secular, and a social one that is loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk.
[95] The concepts of 'periphery' and 'centre' in the context of Turkish politics were coined by Şerif Mardin (1973).

4.1.2. Solidification of the AKP Rhetoric (2007-2011)

Having now established itself firmly in the Turkish political arena, AKP headed to the general elections in 2007 having received the support of Kurds even against DEHAP in many places. The effects of the new government's willingness to move away from the Kemalist rhetoric, along with broadcasting in a language other than Turkish for the first time in Republican history, was reflected in the results of the general elections that were held in July 2007. Those results show that there was even bigger support for AKP than there was in 2002 from places predominated by Kurds (see Table 4.2).

Province	**AKP (%)**	**DEHAP/Independents* (%)**
Gaziantep	**59.25**	5.05
Diyarbakır	40.90	**47.01**
Şanlıurfa	**59.78**	20.14
Batman	**46.41**	39.42
Adıyaman	**65.31**	8.04
Siirt	**48.78**	39.51
Mardin	**44.06**	38.77
Kilis	**56.21**	0.13
Şırnak	26.93	**51.83**

*DEHAP decided not to participate in the general elections and instead, independent MPs of Kurdish origin were nominated.

Table 4.2. 2007 General Election Results in 9 Provinces of Southeast Anatolian Region. Source: http://www.haberturk.com/secim2007 [Accessed 21 July 2015].

The convincing electoral victory for AKP, apart from receiving the approval of a significant section of the society regarding its reforms, also symbolised a crucial victory over the secularist/Kemalist segment of the society. This is showcased by looking at the process of presidential elections, which ultimately resulted in Abdullah Gül being elected as the 11th President of Turkey as the successor of Ahmet Necdet Sezer.

4.1.2.1. The 'Cold War' between AKP and Kemalists

Since it was the first time that a 'counterelite', in Aktürk's term (2012), became president in the history of the Republic, the months leading up to the election of the president by Parliament were not without controversy.[96] Starting with secular rallies [*Cumhuriyet Mitingleri*] in Ankara in April (*BBC News* 14 April 2007) two days before the election process began, the period that resulted in the election of Abdullah Gül on 28 August was very tumultuous. *Cumhuriyet Mitingleri* represented a section of Turkish society that was anxious about the direction in which the Turkish state was heading. The main slogan of the protests, 'Turkey is secular and will remain secular forever', showed the primary motive of these protests.

The Turkish Armed Forces, the vanguard of the Kemalist state, also issued a declaration stating its worries about the direction the government was taking regarding state rhetoric. This declaration, shortly afterwards called an 'e-memorandum' due to its online publication on the official website of the Turkish Armed Forces, showed the willingness of the military to intervene in political affairs if it was deemed necessary, as was exemplified by the military coups of the Republican past.[97] The timing of the memorandum, coinciding with the nomination

[96] The fact that Hayrünnisa Gül, Abdullah Gül's wife, would become the first First Lady with a headscarf was one of the issues that were often brought up during the discussions for the Presidential Elections (*Today's Zaman* 25 April 2007), again showing the issue of secularism was at stake.
[97] Throughout the history of the Republic, there have been two military coups aimed at overthrowing the government: on 27 May 1960 and on 12 September 1980. In 1971, there was also a memorandum by the Turkish Armed Forces forcing the government to resign.

of Abdullah Gül by AKP, meant that it gave reference to the more specific issue of presidential elections, as this excerpt shows:

> The problem that emerged in the presidential election process is focused on arguments over secularism. Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in those arguments, and absolute defender of secularism. Also, the Turkish Armed Forces is definitely opposed to those arguments and negative comments. It will display its attitude and action openly and clearly whenever it is necessary.[98]

However, the memorandum was about more than presidential elections. It was, rather, a statement by the Turkish Armed Forces that declared its main attitude against the changing state rhetoric. Yaşar Büyükanıt, the then-Chief-of-the-General-Staff, stated in an interview in 2009 that he wrote the declaration himself and wanted to emphasize the sensitivity of the Armed Forces to the fundamental principle of secularism (*Zaman* 08 May 2009). This sensitivity could be observed in the passage, where it was stated that "it is observed that some circles who have been carrying out endless efforts to disturb fundamental values of the Republic of Turkey, especially secularism, have escalated their efforts recently" (*BBC News* 28 April 2007). Incidents that were seen as threatening the fundamental principles of the Turkish state, which were 'Atatürk nationalism' and 'secularism', were also mentioned as part of the general motive of the declaration:

> [In line with those efforts to disturb the fundamental values of the Republic], a Quran recital contest was organised on the same day as the celebrations of 23 April[99] but it was cancelled due to the public pressure and the media sensitivity to it. On April 22, a group of girls in Şanlıurfa, gathered from Mardin, Gaziantep and Diyarbakır, who were dressed in age-inappropriate old-fashioned clothes were singing religious songs at an hour when they were supposed to be in bed. During this ceremony, the real aim and intentions of the people organising this were made clear through the removal of the Turkish flag and of the portrait of Atatürk (*Milliyet* 28 April 2007).

This was a manifesto by the Turkish Armed Forces on their disapproval of the direction in which the government's policies at that time were heading. AKP's response to this memorandum was to be dismissive of it, and their nomination of the presidential candidate, Abdullah Gül, did not change. The first round of presidential

[98] The official text of the declaration was removed from the official website of the Turkish Armed Forces in 2011. Excerpts of the original text can be found on BBC News (28 April 2007).
[99] 23 April, National Sovereignty and Children's Day, is one of the national holidays of Turkey and it remarks the day when the first Grand National Assembly of Turkey was established in 1920.

elections in the National Assembly was cancelled on 1 May by the Constitutional Court due to not having enough MPs in the Parliament. The crisis of the presidential elections and the preceding e-memorandum resulted in Erdoğan calling for general elections in the upcoming months. The general elections of 2007, then, in a sense asked people of their opinions about the recent conflict between the government and the military. The convincing victory of AKP in the elections could be interpreted as a 'vote of confidence' in AKP by the people, and it signified that "the e-memorandum had been regarded by a significant portion of society as an excessive and inappropriate move" (Aydinli 2011: 231).

Having a president sharing a similar ideology certainly provided a more favourable environment for AKP than during the period of Sezer, the previous president. Having the majority in Parliament and a president from a similar background, AKP had more power to implement its policies. The Turkish Armed Forces remained the actor that could counterbalance AKP's policies, albeit through undemocratic means. *Ergenekon* operations that officially started in June 2007 were often interpreted as serving the purpose of taming the impact of the military on Turkish politics,[100] and the arrest of many higher-ranked military officers in the Armed Forces reinforces this point. Erdoğan also called for a referendum, which was scheduled for October 2007, to propose amendments to the Constitution, including election of the president by the public. The result of the referendum (68.95% voted for 'Yes') was the second 'vote for confidence' for AKP in its 'cold war' against the Kemalist establishment.

In 2010, another referendum was held on 12 September.[101] The current constitution of Turkey was ratified during the military junta that lasted from 1980 until 1983. Hence, the proposal for amendments to the constitution could be interpreted as another challenge to the military establishment. One of the proposed amendments

[100] Aydinli (2011) explains in detail about the impacts of 'Ergenekon' operations on Turkish politics. He states that after all the operations "those absolutists who might still be willing or courageous enough to attempt a military intervention are now more likely to be deterred by the possibility of an eventual indictment and prosecution" (p. 236).

[101] The choice of the day for the referendum on 12 September was not arbitrary. It is the day when the military coup of 1980 took place and 2010 marked the 30th anniversary of the coup. Symbolically, it represented another step in AKP's challenge to the military establishment within the state.

involved Article 145 of the Turkish Constitution regarding military justice. The third paragraph of the original article stated:

> The offences and persons falling within the jurisdiction of military courts in time of war *or under martial law*, their organisation and the appointment, where necessary, of judges and public prosecutors from civil courts to military courts shall be regulated by law (italics added for emphasis).

The proposal offered to remove the 'or under martial law' part, making it possible for the leaders of the military junta to face trials. The results (57.9% of the voters voted 'Yes') again showed support for AKP during its struggle to overcome the secularist tradition within the state.

The second period of AKP rule established AKP's dominance within the official rhetoric and it seemed that, by that time, AKP managed to stay one step ahead of its secularist rivals. The election results in Southeast Anatolian region, as Tables 4.1 and 4.2 illustrated, showed the support of Kurds for AKP, even over DEHAP in many places. For Kurds, being on AKP's side against the Republican CHP and Nationalist MHP did not mean agreement with all the values AKP represented. Arif said that sometimes it was just a case of "AKP being the lesser of the two evils" (interview, 5 June 2014). As the next section will show, AKP's attempts to change the state rhetoric continued through further reforms. Most of those reforms were focused on language. As was discussed in detail in Chapter 3, language was one of the means through which Kemalist ideology could construct its 'ideal Turk'. Hence, reform on linguistic issues, even though they are on a rather small scale, represented one of the ways through which AKP mounted a challenge to the Kemalist tradition. In this sense, it was no surprise that, during this period, AKP managed to gather the support of the majority of Kurds against the Republican tradition. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, there also remained continuities with Kemalist rhetoric with regards to language, which, in turn, has influenced how 'Kurdishness' is currently manifested.

4.1.2.2. The Reforms of AKP During Its Second Period

In 2009, AKP further developed its reforms and announced them under the name 'Kurdish Initiative' (*Today's Zaman* 18 September 2009). Through this initiative, AKP took one step further than the previous reforms of TV broadcasting in five different languages and established a state TV channel devoted exclusively to Kurdish language 24/7 under the name *TRT 6* (*Hürriyet* 01 January 2009). Other important reforms implemented during this period include:

- Enabling convicts in prisons to speak to their relatives in their native language (*Official Gazzette* 06 November 2009).

- Allowing private television and radio institutions to broadcast in the languages Turkish citizens use in their daily lives (*Official Gazzette* 13 November 2009).

- Establishment of Institute of Living Languages in Artuklu University in Mardin (*Official Gazzette* 01 December 2009). Under this Institute, three departments were established: Kurdish Language and Literature, Assyrian Language and Literature, and Arabic Language and Literature. Kadri Yıldırım, the Head of the Department of Kurdish Language and Literature, stated that the main goal of opening this department was to both "provide Kurdish teachers for education in Kurdish language and to be ready for future when there is a legal framework for education in Kurdish language" (interview, 6 May 2013).

- Enabling communication in different languages in call centres. Through this regulation, "personnel who can speak Kurdish and Zaza language were assigned to the call centre established by Diyarbakır Governor's Office in order to ensure communication with citizens who cannot speak Turkish" (Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security 2013: 228).

- Supporting cultural activities in the Kurdish language. In October 2009, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, for the first time, provided financial support for a movie with frequent Kurdish dialogues[102] (*Milliyet* 01 October 2009).

- In 2010, *Mem û Zîn*, one of the classic works in Kurdish Literature, was published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

- In 2010, a Department of Kurdish Language and Literature was established in Alparslan University in Muş.

The implementation of these reforms was possible due to the shifting official rhetoric. As Aktürk argues, "the reforms of the AKP were justified through an Islamic rhetoric" (2012: 185), which was not the agenda of the previous parties. It was not surprising that there was a rift between the parties that associate themselves with the more 'traditional' state rhetoric and AKP. In October 2009, 34 members of PKK were given a hero's welcome by thousands of people gathered in Diyarbakır. Facing very harsh criticism from Deniz Baykal, the then-leader of CHP, who accused AKP of letting the 'terrorists' receive a welcome reception, and from Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of MHP, who criticized AKP for cooperating with PKK, Erdoğan responded by stating that those exaggerated celebrations were provocations and "nobody can accomplish anything with this kind of policy" (*Hürriyet Daily News* 22 October 2009). The closing of DTP,[103] the organiser of the reception, in December 2009 due to the alleged links of the party to PKK put a strain on the relationship between AKP and the political representatives of Kurds.

BDP, the successor of DTP, boycotted the referendum in 2010. This has had an impact on the voting preferences in the regions predominated by Kurds. Some places such as Hakkari had a record-high percentage in boycotting (94% of the voters there did not vote). The then-co-leaders of BDP, Selahattin Demirtaş and Gültan Kışanak, stated that "boycotting the referendum is the attitude for those who demand regional

[102] *İki Dil Bir Bavul* ('On the Way to School') is a movie about the life of a Turkish teacher working in a Kurdish village and the (mis)communication between the teacher and the students. Directed by two Turkish directors, the movie contains lots of Kurdish dialogue alongside Turkish.
[103] DTP was the pro-Kurdish party in the Assembly before BDP.

autonomy and education in mother tongue" (*Bugün* 12 September 2010). For BDP, voting 'No' in the referendum would be to accept the referendum as it was, and voting 'Yes' would be to accept the suggested proposals that did not contribute to a solution of the Kurdish Question in any way (*Habertürk* 12 July 2010). The boycott -and the explanation of the reasons for boycotting- is crucial in the sense that it made it clear that the reforms implemented by AKP, as breakthrough as they were, would not be enough for Kurds. The two demands the BDP leaders mentioned, regional autonomy and education in mother tongue, are the same two points raised by the respondents, as will be illustrated later in this chapter.

As the general elections in 2011 were approaching, Erdoğan intensified his rhetoric on Islam to gather more support from Kurds. The strategy he used was to emphasize the common bond between Turks and Kurds -that is, Islam- and to attack the other parties, including BDP, due to their dissociation from this common bond. His speech in Diyarbakır two weeks before the elections illustrates this:

> Brothers, the community praying in this Ulu Mosque turns towards the same Kiblah as the communities praying in Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, and Hacıbayram Mosque in Ankara do. See, the kiblah is the same. Is there any discrimination? No (my translation).[104]

His speech in Mardin, a couple of days later, had a similar overtone: "That person who is staying in İmralı [Abdullah Öcalan] stated that the religion of Kurds is Zoroastrianism and that they are closer to Christians…They insulted my Kurdish brothers by saying that Kurds were forced to convert to Islam" (my translation).[105] The view of Islam as something that binds Turks and Kurds is inherited from Erbakan and his *Milli Görüş* outlook. The excerpt below from one of Erbakan's speeches is a good reflection of this view:

> For centuries, children of this country began school with *besmele* [in the name of God…] but you removed *besmele*. What did you put instead? "I'm a Turk, I'm right, I'm hard-working".[106] Saying this gave a Muslim child of Kurdish

[104] The full text of this speech (in Turkish) can be accessed at AKP's official website: https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/1-haziran-diyarbakir-mitingi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/8230#1 (02 June 2011) [Accessed 23 January 2015].
[105] The full text of this speech (in Turkish) can be accessed at AKP's official website: https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/7-haziran-mardin-mitingi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/8376#1 (08 June 2011) [Accessed 23 January 2015].
[106] Erbakan here refers to the first sentence of 'Our Oath' [*Andımız*], which will be explained later in the chapter.

> origin the right to reply, "Is that so? Then I'm a Kurd, I'm more right, and I'm more hard-working". So, you made the peoples of this country be strangers to each other (Quoted in Çalmuk 2001: 8, my translation).

The second period of AKP, then, could be summarised in two points: firstly, it was the period when AKP clearly established its dominance in the political arena by gaining popular support over the Kemalist camp and even over the military[107] as the two referendum results show. Erdoğan started using Islamic rhetoric more often. Whilst this rhetoric may have been useful when gaining Kurdish support, there was still no sign of cooperation between AKP and BDP by the end of this second period. Secondly, this was the period when reforms regarding the Kurds started to be implemented. When AKP's position was secured within the state against the vanguards of the Kemalist tradition, then it became easier to implement the reforms that they did. In line with the argument of this chapter, however, the following discussion will show that there were also continuities within state rhetoric. That is, the focus on a standardised language in the education system and on a centralised nation-state have remained as significant during AKP period. Current manifestations of 'Kurdishness' that are expressed through demands for education in mother tongue and the right to self-determination have been, to a certain extent, shaped by these changes and continuities within the state rhetoric. At the end of the second period of AKP, it still looked like AKP was a good alternative for Kurds who do not vote for pro-Kurdish parties, as is shown by the election results in 2011. It is now time to look at the third period of AKP, which ultimately led to the declaration of a Peace Process.

4.1.3. Continuities Within the Rhetoric (2011-2015)

The general elections in the summer of 2011 proved, again, a convincing victory for AKP. The party increased its votes to 49.95% from 46.47% in 2007. The votes in the Southeast Anatolian region were, again, distributed in a way to show support for AKP (see Table 4.3). Now that AKP further solidified its position with the support of voters from different parts of Turkey, the leaders of AKP had more confidence in the

[107] Gaining the popular support against the Turkish Armed Forces is especially significant since, as recently as 2008, the Armed Forces has been voted as 'the most entrusted institution' in Turkey. See the research report done by Eurobarometer (Spring 2008) to look at the institutions that Turkish society trusts the most (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb_69_first_en.pdf).

policies they were implementing. In his victory speech, Erdoğan did signal some further changes in the Constitution:

> My brothers! We all will write a Constitution that emphasizes freedom. In this constitution, there will be a place for everyone: everyone from the East, from the West, from the North, from the South. My people will say, "This is my Constitution"! The new Constitution will see every member of the nation as a first-class citizen. This constitution will represent every identity and every value; and will answer every demand of freedom, democracy, peace and justice. This constitution shall be the constitution of Turks, Kurds, Zazas, Arabs, Circassians, Lazs, Georgians, Romani, Turkmens, Alevis, Sunnis, of all 74 million people (my translation).[108]

Whilst a rhetorical embrace of multiculturalism could be observed in Erdoğan's statement, an incident just a couple of months after this statement provided the first big conflict between AKP and the Kurds. On December 28, 2011, a military air raid in the Kurdish village of Robozik (Uludere in its official Turkish name) killed 35 villagers. Two days later, the then-deputy-chairman of AKP, Hüseyin Çelik, in his official statement, declared that it was "an operational mistake" and that "the operation was carried out on the presumption that they were PKK terrorists" (*Hürriyet Daily News* 30 December 2011a). In response to this, Bahoz Erdal, one of the PKK's senior leaders, declared in a statement that this was not an accident but rather something "organised and planned," while Selahattin Demirtaş, the then-co-chairman of BDP, called on Kurds to respond to this "massacre of civilians by democratic means" (*Hürriyet Daily News* 30 December 2011b). The attack against the Deputy Governor by locals during his visit to Robozik (*Hürriyet Daily News* 31 December 2011) showed the first signs of tension between people and state officials.

The most important development regarding Kurdish rights during this period came in 2012 when primary schools started to offer the Kurdish language as an elective course starting from the 2012-2013 education year. This development again brought reactions against it. This reform, referred to as "a historical step" by Erdoğan (*BBC* 12 June 2012), was criticised by both secularists and Kurds, albeit for different reasons. CHP took the issue as yet another example of the challenge to state rhetoric that had so far been dominated by Kemalist ideology. Nur Serter, an MP for Istanbul

[108] The full text of this speech (in Turkish) can be accessed at AKP's official website: https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/basbakan-erdoganin-12-haziran-gecesi-yaptigi-konusmanin-tam-metni/8520#1 [Accessed 25 January 2015].

from CHP, stated that this was a part of a bigger project that would ultimately lead to the territorial disintegrity of the state:

Province	**AKP (%)**	**BDP/Independents (%)***
Gaziantep	**61,69**	5,39
Diyarbakır	32,17	**61,69**
Şanlıurfa	**63,46**	26,97
Batman	37,13	**51,48**
Adıyaman	**67,30**	6,56
Siirt	**48,03**	42,45
Mardin	32,17	**60,85**
Kilis	**59,54**	0,13
Şırnak	20,61	**72,31**

*BDP decided not to participate in the general elections and instead, independent MPs of Kurdish origin were nominated.

Table 4.3: 2011 General Election Results in 9 Provinces of Southeast Anatolian Region. Source: http://www.haberturk.com/secim/secim2011/genel-secim [Accessed 25 January 2015].

> We travelled a lot; we went to those regions and I wonder if the problem of a child going to the school in those regions is not to speak Kurdish or is it not to speak Turkish? A child starting the school in those regions already speaks Kurdish, so what makes it difficult for her in the school is for her not to know any Turkish because all the classes will be in Turkish. The main project should be to assign teachers in those regions who can speak both Kurdish and Turkish so that they could teach Turkish to children who are native speakers of Kurdish. The language of the education system in Turkey is Turkish; it should remain Turkish and I believe that it will remain Turkish (*Milliyet* 14 June 2012, my translation).

This kind of reasoning could be seen as the extension of the importance that Atatürk placed on language during the early Republican period. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the Turkish language was seen as one of the means through which an 'ideal Turk' could be constructed. Ibrahim, a construction worker based in Ayvalık, raised his objection to this exact reasoning, saying that "it is absurd that people would still think that education in mother tongue could make a state disintegrate even in this age of technology where the boundaries are being erased" (interview, 26 February 2013).

Why did Kurds raise objections to this reform? For them, it was some kind of a compromising tactic that did not meet the objectives of the Kurdish movement. The next section will show through interview data that these changes were not satisfactory enough for Kurds for different reasons. At the 'elites' level, one of the BDP co-chairs, Kışanak, stated that "there could be no bigger torture than teaching someone his native language as a foreign language" (my translation, *TRT Haber* 12 June 2012), while the other, Selahattin Demirtaş stated:

> If Kurdish is going to be an elective course, then make it an elective for Turks in the West. Kurds would never accept Kurdish as an elective course. Kurds are a people, a nation. You assimilate a people and then, want to end this assimilation by offering a 2-hour elective course. This, we will never accept (*ANF News* 13 June 2012, my translation).

Murat Karayılan, one of the senior leaders of PKK, made this declaration:

> Making the native language of Kurds as an elective course for Kurds is both a very old-fashioned-minded step and a sign that Turkish imperialism still continues its assimilation policies. There is no 'historical step' as was declared but a historical provocation by reducing the right to live and to have education in mother tongue, *which constitutes the core of the historical Kurdish Question,* into an elective course. This is a provocation and a simplification of the solution to Kurdish Question [italics added] (*Bugün* 15 June 2012, my translation).

Another important event during the period leading up to the declaration of a Peace Process is the hunger strikes that started in September 2012. On 12 September, almost 600 prisoners from different prisons across Turkey started a hunger strike demanding better treatment of Kurds. The protesters had three key demands: improvement of the imprisonment situation for Abdullah Öcalan, lifting of the ban on using Kurdish in courts, and education in mother tongue. Erdoğan responded by

denouncing the strikes and not taking into account any of the demands of the prisoners. He stated that "there are no hunger strikes" and the whole thing "is a complete show" (*Hürriyet Daily News* 31 October 2012). He continued his dismissive language by blaming PKK and BDP for the hunger strikes and told BDP to call on the prisoners to end their strike. Not only did Erdoğan dismiss the demands of the strikers, he in fact encouraged even more tension regarding the demand for Öcalan's situation to be improved. In November 2012, he stated that the majority of the Turkish public wants the death penalty to be reinstated so that Abdullah Öcalan could be executed.[109] The timing of this statement, when the hunger strikes were still continuing, suggests that it was a deliberate attempt by Erdoğan to give the impression that he would not succumb to what the prisoners had demanded. The BDP leaders' call to support for the hunger strikes accelerated the tension between AKP and BDP. However, the hunger strikes ended on 18 November because of Abdullah Öcalan's call for the strikes to end. The importance of these hunger strikes was that they did create space for new discussions on one of the key prisoner demands: the use of the Kurdish language in courts. Towards the end of the hunger strikes, the Justice Committee within the government proposed an amendment for the Criminal Procedure Code, which paved the way for defendants to make their verbal defences in a language other than Turkish in which they state they express themselves better.[110] These changes were approved by the Parliament in January 2013.

On 21 March 2013, millions of Kurds gathered in Diyarbakır to celebrate *Newroz.*[111] There, Abdullah Öcalan's message was read to the crowd, stating that it was time to withdraw the armed struggle and "let the words speak." This historic statement, ordering PKK to stop military activities, marked the beginning of a ceasefire. A

[109] When Öcalan was first captured by the Turkish authorities in 1999, he was initially given the death penalty. After the abolishment of the death penalty in 2002, this was replaced by aggravated life imprisonment in Imralı Island at Marmara Sea.

[110] The full proposal in Turkish can be found on-line on the official website of the Grand National Assembly: http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tasari_teklif_sd.onerge_bilgileri?kanunlar_sira_no=113445 [Accessed 03 February 2015].

[111] *Newroz* (21 March) is the biggest holiday of the year for Kurds. Its celebration has always been contested in Turkey, like many other Kurdish traditions, and until 2000, celebrating *Newroz* was illegal. After the legalisation of *Newroz*, the Kurdish spelling was forbidden, changing it to its Turkish spelling *Nevruz* instead. Due to the still-ongoing political connotations of this day, Öcalan's decision of declaring the ceasefire on the day of *Newroz* was not an arbitrary choice.

month later, the PKK released a statement on its official website in response to this call for a ceasefire, confirming that they were going to start the withdrawal of their guerrilla forces. Defining this as 'the first phase' of the democratic solution process, 'the second phase' was defined as where the government takes the necessary steps.

> The second phase is the phase where the state and government shall fulfil its obligations so that a permanent solution of the question can be reached. The reforms taken up within the constitutional solution framework shall generate the conditions that will truly democratize Turkey and resolve the Kurdish Question...It is especially critical that a new democratic constitution that enables the democratization of Turkey, ends the denial of the Kurdish people and accepts its existence and freedom, as well as guarantees the rights and freedoms of all identities, beliefs and creeds and ensures their equality is drawn up.[112]

The government responded to this by establishing a Commission of 63 people consisting of artists, journalists, writers, actors and actresses, and famous individuals from different occupations. The 'Wise Men Commission', as they were called, was divided into seven groups, each representing the seven regions within Turkey. During the month of April, this Commission visited those regions they were responsible for in order to inform the public about the newly-announced Peace Process.[113] In a way, this Commission acted like an intermediary between the government and people, listening to the people in places they visited and reporting their observations to the government.

For the purposes of this chapter, the most crucial feature of this AKP period could be characterised as reaffirming its stance not only against the secularist establishment but also against the extreme Kurdish nationalist stance. As was emphasised previously when the first two periods were described, the difference between AKP (and other institutions with a background of *Milli Görüş* ideology) and the parties coming from a secular tradition was that it was easier for AKP to use Islam as a common bond between Kurds and Turks, and, hence, they did not see the existence of a separate Kurdish identity as a threat to the integrity of the Turkish state as the secularists did. The aforementioned reforms implemented during the AKP rule

[112] The full statement in English can be accessed via the official website of PKK: http://pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=187 [Accessed 09 February 2015].
[113] It is necessary to state here that throughout the writing period of this thesis, there have been developments regarding the Peace Process. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the ceasefire ended and as of August 2016, the military activities between the Turkish state and the PKK continue.

constitute a break from the official rhetoric, yet they do not meet the demands of Kurds either. While it was possible for Erdoğan to meet the identity demands of Kurds due to the common bond of Islam, the rhetoric throughout the AKP period has not changed significantly when it came to issues of language. Back in December 2010, in his speech in the National Assembly, he stated that "my nation has only one language and that is Turkish. Municipalities are also institutions of the state, so they also use Turkish" (my translation),[114] clearly implicating that municipalities in regions where it is predominated by Kurds cannot use the Kurdish language in their official conversations. Similarly, in October 2012, he declared that "there is no such thing as education in mother tongue. There cannot be a right to have education in mother tongue as Turkish is the official language" (my translation), reaffirming the official rhetoric on the issue of education in mother tongue. His use of religion to emphasise the unity of the nation, however, has continued to be a theme in his speeches. In May 2012, in a public speech he gave in Adana, he reiterated the '4 red lines' AKP follows in its policies: one nation, one flag, one state and one religion.[115] Taking religion away as one of the bonds that unites the peoples of Turkey was one of the principles necessary for the Kemalist ideology to construct 'the ideal Turk'. By including religion as one of the 'red lines' of the state's policies, AKP has significantly shifted the state rhetoric compared to the rhetoric of the Kemalist ideology.

The discussion so far has focused on the differences in state rhetoric since AKP came to power in 2002. By doing that, it also aimed to serve the purpose of comparing the two 'moments of transition' in the Republican history (the Kemalist period and the AKP period) in terms of their rhetoric. How is this comparison, however, useful in our understanding of 'Kurdishness'? Related to the argument that there are variances of 'Kurdishness', what this chapter shows is that the 'Kurdishness' exhibited through the following data has been influenced by the state rhetoric of its period. I argue that the differences between the two rhetorics of those two periods are also reflected in how 'Kurdishness' in those periods is manifested. In Chapter 3, it was discussed that

[114] His full speech in Turkish can be watched online on this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abFUz7_ooaw (2010), 26 December [Accessed 02 August 2015].
[115] His full speech in Turkish can be watched online on this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vY9DejExm0g (2012), 05 May [Accessed 02 August 2015].

the emphasis during the early periods of the Turkish Republic was on modernising/Westernising, centralising, and secularising the nation-state. For this reason, the kind of 'Kurdishness' formed was partly influenced by those policies of the state. The Sheikh Said Rebellion, the first major rebellion against the Turkish state, was a combination of religious, ethnic, and tribal factors. The AKP period, on the other hand, saw religion being brought into the state rhetoric. This approach embraced the Islamic concept of *ummah* and this, in turn, has allowed some space for expressions of other ethnicities. Therefore, the form of 'Kurdishness' that is currently exhibited is not so much through religious and tribal demands. Rather, as will be shown in the following sections, it is more focused on linguistic rights and self-determination demands. Even though there has been a significant shift in the official rhetoric with regards to religion, the emphasis that has been put on language and on centralisation has remained as significant, as shown earlier. This, in turn, has shaped a form of 'Kurdishness' that is exhibited through linguistic and self-determination demands, instead of one that focused on identity demands in its earlier form.

At this point, it is significant to point out that the first time that the word 'Kurd' was mentioned within the state rhetoric was in the early 1990s. A brief overview was given in Chapter 3 with regards to the transformation of the Kurdish Movement in the 1960s and in the 1970s. It was not until the early 1990s, when Turgut Özal, the then-president of the Turkish Republic, started mentioning the word 'Kurd' publicly, that there were further developments with regards to Kurds in Turkey. He stated during his visit to the United States in 1991 that he managed to become President even though his grandmother was "probably a Kurd" (*Milliyet* 28 March 1991). The month before that, Özal also announced that the Kurdish language ban was going to be lifted. This is important in showing that it is not unique to the AKP period that there have been significant developments with regards to Kurds in Turkey. The early 1990s, not least due to the neoliberalist period Turkey was going through (discussed in the Introduction), saw the recognition of Kurds as a separate nation, which had not been the case until then. However, a major shift in the official rhetoric, or the "political hegemony of a counterelite with an Islamic multiculturalist vision" (Aktürk 2012: 175), happened, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, during the AKP period. To understand how 'Kurdishness' is being impacted by state

rhetoric, which is one of the questions that this research explores, the AKP period provides another 'moment of transition'. This section discussed that state rhetoric has gone through a transition from a secular Kemalist rhetoric to an Islamic multiculturalist one. However, continuities within rhetoric were also discussed such as emphasis put on the Turkish language and on centralisation. The following section will focus on how 'Kurdishness', in its current form, is exhibited by looking at the data from the respondents. By doing that, it will be illustrated that the two most common forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested by the respondents, the demand to have education in mother tongue and the right to self-determination, have been shaped in accordance with these changes and continuities within state rhetoric discussed in this section.

4.2. The Manifestations of 'Kurdishness' in Its Recent Form

4.2.1. The Demand for Education in Mother Tongue

The right to have education in one's mother tongue is something that is demanded by even those respondents who do not defend the idea of an independent Kurdistan. This, again, suggests that there could be different ways of exhibiting 'Kurdishness'. Ahmet, a university student from Mardin, illustrates this by saying:

> There are many Kurds living in big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara; therefore, a solution such as drawing borders, keeping one side of the border and leaving the other side is not logical. I think that Turks should get rid of their paranoia of 'making compromises'…I think that Turks should be more open-minded about this. We should give back the rights of Kurds that were taken away from them. There is nothing more natural than someone having education in his mother tongue (interview, 26 April 2013).

The statements of the respondents regarding the right to have education in mother tongue are clearly in contradiction to what Nur Serter, as a representative of CHP, demanded. Her argument that the main objective of teachers should be to teach Turkish is something that Emel, a teacher herself, would disagree with. Having worked in the Southeast region, she thinks that her lack of fluency in the Kurdish

language constituted a problem there. One incident she encountered when she was working in a small village of Mardin illustrates this:

> I was working with mentally disabled kids. I had a student who said *evet* ('yes' in Turkish) to everything I said, even to things that one is not supposed to say *evet*. I had an assistant who could speak Kurdish and when I talked to her, she told me that the student said 'no' to many of the things she said because, as we realized later, *evet* was the only word he knew in Turkish. This looked like a torture to me; forcing children, who are even mentally disabled, to speak Turkish…you can only be productive as long as there is education in mother tongue (interview, 26 February 2013).

Halil, a language activist working in the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, stated that the Kurdish Question cannot be solved without granting two rights: education in mother tongue and regional governments [*yerelden yönetim*] (interview, 4 March 2013). Dilan said that even though, on an individual level, some demands might change, in general, "every Kurd wants to have education in their mother tongue" (interview, 28 April 2013). Meryem, when asked what she wants the most from the Peace Process, answered that "most importantly, it would be to have education in our language" (interview, 4 May 2013). Ibrahim said that his child "does not know his own language and should go to private Kurdish courses that were established through the taxes he has paid. If my child does not know his own language, this is the state's fault." For him, education in mother tongue is crucial for the survival of the Kurdish language, and "if the right to have education in mother tongue does not exist, then Kurdish language would be extinct in 20 years" (interview, 26 February 2013). Mahsun, on the other hand, argued for a more active strategy for Kurds in 'saving our language':

> If Kurds say 'the state should save our language', then that would be wrong. It is not the state that would save their language; it is the Kurds themselves who is going to save it…what the state should do, though, is *to abolish the bans on language*: The state should not ban it if a person wants to speak Kurdish in public space, if he wants to defend himself in courts in Kurdish or if he wants to have an education in Kurdish (italics added for emphasis, interview, 20 February 2013).

For Ümit, who works in the municipality of Diyarbakır, the right to have education in mother tongue is one of the most natural rights:

> In law, some rights cannot be abolished; they are alienable and you only have to respect those rights. The right to have education in mother tongue is one of those rights. A child, from any part of the world, should be able to have an education in the language he has learnt from his parents if he wants to (interview, 30 April 2013).

AKP's language reforms (the establishment of a state TV channel exclusively in Kurdish and the opening of Kurdish language courses in schools), as mentioned earlier, have been different than earlier state rhetoric. Amongst the respondents; however, the common perception was that these were, while good steps, basically tactics to distract people from discussing the bigger issues such as education in mother tongue. İlhan, for instance, thinks that the reforms, at the end, do not reflect the genuine attitude of the government:

> The state was forced to launch a TV channel in Kurdish due to persistence of the Kurdish struggle but the way they do that is incorrect as well: they use the language incorrectly; the grammar they use is incorrect, and the literature they use is incorrect. They do not employ the experts in Kurdish language and literature because they have this attitude of 'if something is going to be done, it should be done our way'. They would not behave like that if they were sincere. These are activities that are diverting and evading. These activities do not have any constitutional basis. And now they are opening Kurdish language courses, so we have to pay to learn our own language (interview, 22 April 2013).

Ibrahim also has doubts about *TRT 6* and its sincerity. He said that it is also important to understand why *TRT 6* was established. In his words:

> It [the establishment of *TRT 6*] will not be much useful if they show the history of Zonguldak Ereğli[116] all the time. It would be good if they show our struggle and why it is happening. But the way it is now is for the integration of people into the system (interview, 26 February 2013).

For Halil, who insisted that education in mother tongue is one of the non-negotiables for a solution to the Kurdish Question, expressed his discontent with *TRT 6* by saying that to him, it feels like an attempt to curb increasing Kurdish nationalism (interview, 4 March 2013). Related to the overall argument of this thesis, what is being exhibited here by the respondents is another variant of 'Kurdishness' that has been modified since the early Republican period. Religious elements no longer carry the same significance in the formation of 'Kurdishness' as they did during the early

[116] This is a small town on the Black Sea coast of Turkey. It was most possibly mentioned to emphasise the irrelevance of the programs shown on *TRT 6* to Kurds.

Republican period due to the importance the AKP rhetoric has put on religion. Now, it is a form of 'Kurdishness' that has been dominated by linguistic concerns. Overall, 12 respondents (Mehmet, Arif, Meryem, Ali, Halil, Dilan, Mahsun, Kadir, İlhan, Ibrahim, Emel, and Ahmet) mentioned the phrase 'education in mother tongue' [*anadilde eğitim*] when they discussed their demands.

The current situation allows Kurdish as an elective course starting from the fifth grade. This is not the ideal situation for Kurds also for pedagogical reasons. Kadir, who is a literature professor, said that the exposure to the Kurdish language should start from the first grade because if a child is exposed to a language other than his native language for the first five years of his education, then he will be detached from his own language and will never be interested in it again (interview, 6 May 2013).

The current education system in the Turkish language also provides an opportunity for the state to turn its citizens into 'the ideal Turks', the contents of which were discussed in Chapter 3. This could be interpreted as remodelling 'the French way' as was discussed by Eugen Weber (1977). In his extensive study of rural France, Weber discusses schools and schooling as one of the agents for the transformation of peasants into 'Frenchmen'. Apart from being "great socializing agents" (Weber 1977: 332) where children whose mother languages were anything but French had to speak French, the schools were also the "instruments of indoctrination and patriotic conditioning" (Weber 1977: 333), which was made possible through history and geography courses. Soysal and Schissler also emphasise the importance of education in the process of nation-building, arguing that school textbooks have been "subordinated to particular control mechanisms by the state and/or dominant elites in the process of nation building and the creation of loyal citizens" (2005: 1). Therefore, it should be no surprise that the production of knowledge and national objectives go hand in hand (Soysal and Schissler 2005: 1). The Turkish schooling system, similar to this understanding, is also in line with the ideals of the nation-state. This is reflected in many ways, from the way the classrooms are designed to the curriculum. Halil exemplifies this when talking about the curriculum for high schools. Interestingly enough, his example also draws on history courses:

> The current education system was founded on the idea that Kurds do not exist. Kurds are mentioned only once in all history courses and that is only when discussing the societies that were established during the Independence War: Society of Kurdish History is described as one of the 'harmful societies' (interview, 4 March 2013).

The way the classrooms are designed also manifests the loyalty of the state to Atatürk nationalism. The fact that every classroom has to have an 'Atatürk corner' that contains a portrait of Atatürk, the Turkish flag, the lyrics of the National Anthem and the full speech of Atatürk's Address to the Turkish Youth is secured by the law. However, as the AKP rhetoric is mainly based on challenging the Kemalist establishment, as the first half of this chapter discussed, it is not surprising to see attempts to change this law. Those attempts happened during the second period of AKP. In March 2008, the Ministry of National Education [*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* or MEB] amended a regulation concerning private education institutions. This amended regulation made no reference to the existence of an 'Atatürk corner'.[117] The Atatürkist Thought Association [*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*] sued MEB for implementing anti-constitutional laws in the Turkish Council of State [*Danıştay*], and in November 2008, *Danıştay* decided to suspend the amended regulation. In its current form, the regulation merely states that there is an 'Atatürk corner' in private education institutions without specifying what this corner should entail. Even though being seemingly small amendments, these attempts go in line with the aforementioned ideological foundations of AKP. More importantly, however, this also shows the importance that is put on the education system for the implementation of an ideology, as Gellner suggested, has remained more or less the same. The importance of controlling the education system for AKP, it could be suggested, is the reason for not implementing the right to education in the Kurdish language. Gellner's theory of modernisation suggests that the education system within a nation-state is *the* medium for reproducing members of the nation-state and, as was also the case in Weber's study of France (1977), the AKP period presents an example of this understanding. Ali, one of the secondary school students in Derik, strongly reacted when asked about the 'Atatürk corner' in his classroom. He said that he does not

[117] The full regulation in Turkish was published on Official Gazzette on 8 March 2008 (http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2008/03/20080308.htm&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2008/03/20080308.htm) [Accessed 11 August 2015].

want to see *that* guy [Atatürk] in his classroom and would rather see a picture of his own leader instead.[118] The fact that there was a picture of a Turkish flag also bothered him so much that his teacher, Dilan, had to interrupt and warn him not to be disrespectful of any flag (field notes, 27 April 2013). This incident suggests that a form of 'Kurdishness' could be formed as a reaction to the Kemalist principles of the state, hence suggesting the importance of state rhetoric on formation of 'Kurdishness'.

In September 2013, six months into the Peace Process, Erdoğan announced AKP's 'Democratisation and Human Rights Package'. In the press conference, he stated that "the top-down, authoritarian, despotic, and an arrogant state way of doing politics has been abolished through the 'Silent Revolution' we have had in law and democracy in the last 11 years" (my translation),[119] reinstating his party's anti-establishment stance. Regarding the Kurds, the most important points of this package were the allowance of education in different languages and dialects other than Turkish in private schools and the abolishment of *Andımız* ('Our Oath') in primary schools. *Andımız* is a policy that was implemented in 1933 during the period of 'High Kemalism' (Cagaptay 2006). It was compulsory for all students in every public and private primary school to recite this oath every morning. The full text of *Andımız* read:

> I am a Turk. I am honest and I am a hard worker. My duty is to protect those younger than me and to respect my elders, to love my country and my people more than I love myself. My ideal is to progress. Hey, Great Atatürk! I solemnly promise to walk on the road you have opened, to the goal you have showed, without stopping. I offer my existence to the Turkish nation as a gift. How happy for the one who says 'I am a Turk' (cited in Sevincer and Biseth 2013: 76).

Arif stated that the Kurdish Movement has not reached its goals yet because "there is still no education in mother tongue" (interview, 5 June 2014). This statement, coming after the declaration of the Package, is one example of how, again, state rhetoric could play a role in exhibiting 'Kurdishness'. The official statement of PKK, right after Erdoğan's declaration over what the Package entails, also shows their

[118] The student here refers to Abdullah Öcalan as his leader.
[119] The full text in Turkish can be found online on AKP's official website: https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/basbakan-erdoganin-demokratiklesme-paketi-basin-aciklamasinin-tam-metni/52596# [Accessed 03 February 2015].

dissatisfaction with the contents of the Package. This excerpt from the Declaration illustrates this point:

> It [the Package] has disappointed democratic powers, mainly Kurds. And it was inevitably disappointing because it is not possible for something that was implemented in a non-democratic way to include democratic points…It is clear that its contents do not fulfil the demands of Kurds and the democratic powers…By abolishing racist and outdated policies such as *Andımız*, which had been exposed for years, which had no justification anymore, and which had been a burden for them as well, they wanted to avoid democratic solution demands of Kurdish people (my translation).[120]

As the government was clearly not fulfilling the requirements of 'the second phase' of the Peace Process, PKK announced that it would stop the withdrawal of its guerrilla forces.

The conflict over the issue of education in mother tongue emerges out of the importance both sides put on language. The usage of the Turkish language during the early Republican period by the leaders of the nation-state was explained in Chapter 3. The policies of AKP, as discussed so far, show the different rhetoric they use. The more overt use of religion in their rhetoric, more specifically, has differentiated AKP from its predecessors. Through religion, the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnicity could be recognized, unlike the previous eras of the nation-state. In terms of the role of language, however, it is possible to observe a continuity between the Kemalist period and the AKP period. The statement Erdoğan made the day after *Newroz* celebrations of 2013 once again shows the conflict that is at the core of the Kurdish Question: "They wrote 'Have a happy *Newroz*' in Kurdish; would it be bad if they also wrote this in Turkish? These are provocations that are against the progress of Peace Process" (my translation, *Milliyet* 22 March 2013). This statement, made the day after the declaration of Peace Process, suggests that the issue of language remains one of the non-negotiables for both the state and Kurds, and this has had a significant effect on the (re-) shaping of 'Kurdishness'.

[120] PKK made this declaration via ANF on 10 October 2013. The full text of the declaration in Turkish now can be found on http://www.internethaber.com/pkk-demokratiklesme-paketi-deklarasyonu-tam-metin-594511h.htm [Accessed 07 February 2015].

4.2.2. The Right for Self-Determination

The right for self-determination is another common theme that emerged amongst the respondents. Compared to the issue of education in mother tongue, however, this demand, as will be shown shortly, could be manifested through a variety of ways. Unlike the right to have education in mother tongue, the right for self-determination is not only expressed through a simple 'yes' or 'no', but through different levels of self-determination. These expressions could range from any degree of autonomy to an independent state. Mehmet, a university student from Mardin, mentioned these differences amongst Kurds:

> Right now, independence is the only goal for 15, 16-year-olds. Öcalan does not mention the idea of an independent Kurdistan since 1993. There are many Kurdish intellectuals who say that "Öcalan gave up the idea of a Kurdistan; he is trying to reach an agreement with Turkey and to save himself". Of course, there is a disunity amongst Kurds when it comes to Apo (interview, 26 April 2013).[121]

The next chapter will discuss the role different regions play in generating different contexts for manifesting 'Kurdishness'. In the context of this section, being based in different parts of Turkey affects different expressions of the respondents' demands in physical terms. Arif's case illustrates this point: Arif, whose parents moved from Mardin to Ayvalık when he was two years old, said that the only difference in living his life as a Kurd if they stayed in Mardin would be that he might have been possibly physically involved with the activities of PKK (interview, 5 June 2014). Mahsun defended the idea of autonomy by still maintaining a unitary structure. "If there were 8-10 regions, each region had its own Assembly and if everyone tried to develop his or her own region, it would be possible to maintain the unitary structure with such cultural richness" (interview, 20 February 2013). Arif answered, when asked whether the Kurdish Movement has reached its goals yet, 'no' "because there is no autonomy there [*oradaki özerklik*] yet" (interview, 5 June 2014). Halil stated the issue of regional governments as one of the other 'non-negotiables' to solve the Kurdish Question. He continued:

[121] 'Apo' is the nickname for Abdullah Öcalan amongst Kurds. PKK, in its declarations and statements, refers to him as *Önder Apo* ('Apo the Leader').

> There is distrust amongst Kurds after 80, 90 years of oppression, of assimilation, of massacres: a lack of trust against this system. That is why they want to rule themselves. They want to have the control of the sources on their own lands (interview, 4 March 2013).

The demand for any degree of self-determination is related to the topic of the previous section, education in mother tongue. This relation could be explained through the aforementioned idea of the Turkish state having a monopoly on the use of language and "monopoly of the education system" (Gellner 1983). If one of the common demands from Kurds is the right to have education in mother tongue, then it would not be surprising to also demand some form of self-determination to have control over the language and the education system. Halil illustrates this point by saying that "the regionalisation [*yerelleşme*] of the education system is better not only for Kurds but for all Turkey and a system where local governments are strengthened [*ademi merkeziyetçilik*] is suitable for this" (interview, 4 March 2013).

Yet, it was not always the case that the respondents were as straightforward as those mentioned earlier. In line with the argument mentioned in the beginning of this section, it is possible to see variances with regards to these demands. In some cases, there were uses of ambiguous terms. Emel, when talking about her activism, always used the phrase 'Kurdish Freedom Movement' [*Kürt Özgürlük Hareketi*]. This phrase was most probably chosen because that is how PKK and Öcalan refer to the movement, yet it was not clear, throughout all of our conversations, what the Freedom Movement entails for her. Whether, for her, it was freedom in the sense of having more rights or having an independent state, she did not elaborate. Even though she specifically stated education in mother tongue as one of the demands she valued, regarding other demands, she was less specific. Ibrahim also used a similar phrase: *Kürt Özgürlük Mücadelesi,* which could be translated as 'Kurdish Struggle to Freedom'. He was very specific in his demand for education in mother tongue but, again, he did not elaborate on what 'freedom' exactly means for him apart from linguistic demands. Meryem, similarly, when asked what would be the ultimate goal for her personally, answered that "it would be our freedom" (interview, 4 May 2013). Again, there was no reference to what she specifically meant by 'freedom' throughout her narrative. Ali used the term 'self-determination' [*milletlerin kendi geleceklerini tayin etme hakkı*] when explaining his wishes. In his words, the right to

self-determination for nations is necessary because "even if something bad happens, then maybe we would suffer less thinking that it is our own decision" (interview, 28 April 2013). Ebru stated that Kurds wanted their own lands (interview, 5 May 2013) and Ahmet stated that Kurds "should have the right to self-rule [*kendini yönetme hakkı*]" (interview, 26 April 2013). Ahmet's idea of Kurdish self-rule could be interpreted as an idea that is closer to regional autonomy than to the idea of independence. This could be inferred by looking at the quotation that was given earlier by Ahmet (p. 123). He thinks that it is not as simple as drawing borders when taking into account the massive Kurdish population in 'Western' cities such as Istanbul or Ankara. What is important to notice here is that the different terms that were used by the respondents ('self-rule', 'freedom', 'autonomy') are all different manifestations of the more umbrella term 'self-determination'.

Contrary to the Kemalist period where Kurds were regarded as Turks who had forgotten their true identity, 'Kurdishness' as a separate ethnic category is now taken for granted; it is becoming an "immutable category," as Ergin (2014) calls it. The recognition of 'Kurdishness' as a separate ethnic category has become a part of the official rhetoric as this chapter explores. Saracoglu (2009), based on the case study he conducted in Izmir, coins the term "exclusive recognition" of everyday relations that "develops independently of the manipulation of the state" (2009: 643). According to Saracoglu, not only have Kurds been recognized as a separate 'people', but this recognition is usually accompanied by an anti-Kurdish discourse based on negative perceptions against Kurds. Exclusive recognition, this argument continues, is constructed by non-Kurds through their interactions with Kurdish immigrants in their everyday lives. The following two chapters will discuss the importance of everyday interactions in manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. What this chapter aims to add to the discussion is the argument that, apart from those everyday interactions the respondents experienced in their daily lives, their interactions with the nation-state also shape the way 'Kurdishness' exhibits itself. Now that the existence of Kurds as a separate group of peoples has been recognised both in the state rhetoric, as discussed in the first part of this chapter, and in the public domain (Çelik 2005; Saracoglu 2009), other aspects through which 'Kurdishness' is exhibited have gained more importance, such as demands for language rights and for self-determination.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to continue the discussion of Chapter 3 by again focusing on state rhetoric, yet this time on the rhetoric of AKP, the second of the two 'moments of transition'. It argued that both the major changes and the continuity between the two 'moments of transition' have had an impact on which 'Kurdishness' is being exhibited. All in all, the crucial differences between Kemalist and AKP rhetoric, the two 'moments of transition', could be summarised in a couple of points: firstly, Kurds, during the Kemalist period, were not recognised as a separate ethnic category. Rather, they were seen as 'Turks' who had forgotten their identity and who needed to be reminded of their 'Turkishness'. For this purpose, all cultural elements that were related to 'non-Turkish' groups were suppressed and denied. The developments in the early 1990s, such as President Özal's publicly announcing his Kurdish ancestry, were considered a breakthrough. It was not until the start of the AKP period in 2002, however, that there were official changes in the state rhetoric that had been, until that time, based on Kemalist principles. The emphasis on religion in state rhetoric has brought about a new understanding based on the Islamic concept of *ummah*, which has allowed the acceptance of non-Turk ethnic groups as a separate ethnic category. This has, in turn, influenced the way 'Kurdishness' has been manifested: instead of a form of 'Kurdishness' that prioritizes the recognition of 'Kurdishness' as a separate ethnicity, as it was during the Kemalist era, it now focuses on linguistic and anti-centralisation demands. This is because the control of the state over the use of language and the emphasis given on centralisation have remained as significant during the AKP period as they were in previous eras of the nation-state.

This chapter, by discussing the role state rhetoric plays on different manifestations of 'Kurdishness', focused on the first of the three factors that generate different contexts for different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Chapters 5 and 6 will focus on two other factors, both of which emerge during the course of everyday life amongst 'ordinary people'. Chapter 5 will explore how regions contribute to providing different contexts through "informal, everyday discrimination" (Wimmer 2013: 75). Shifting

the focus from state rhetoric to regions, this thesis now moves towards a more micro context.

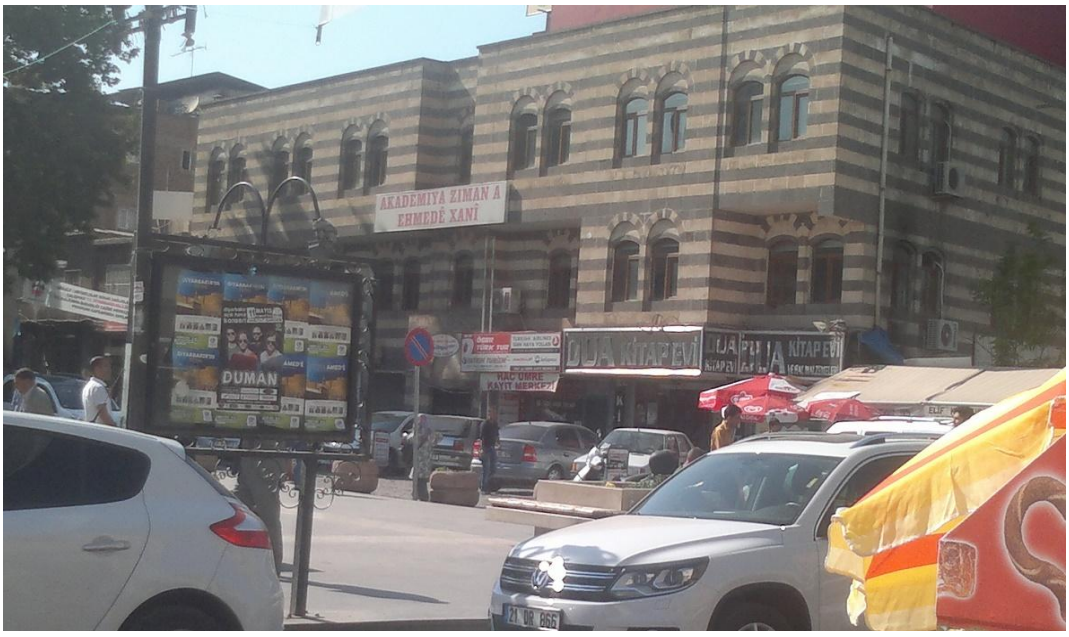
5. CONTEXTUALISING 'KURDISHNESS' THROUGH REGIONS: EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF PREJUDICE/DISCRIMINATION

5.1. Introduction

Muhsin Kızılkaya, a Kurdish journalist famous for his translations to the Kurdish language, argues in one of his interviews that "the state has been partially successful in its policies by assimilating 50% of the Kurds within Turkey" and "the other half has managed to retain their identity and their culture". He bases his estimation on the urbanization and migration rate and states that "the ones living in the cities have become 'Turkified' and they lead a Turkish life".[122] This observation is one of the statements that reflect the diversity of experiences of Kurds living in different towns within Turkey. In this and the following chapter, I will discuss 'bottom-up' factors that play a role in the emergence of varieties of 'Kurdishness'. This chapter will focus on how living in different regions within Turkey plays a role in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested. As the previous chapter started, this chapter will use fieldwork data to explore the roles that different regions play in manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. The first part of chapter will illustrate the different forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested by the respondents. The second part of the chapter will discuss "informal, everyday discrimination" (Wimmer 2013: 75) as one of the means through which boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped. The role that different regions play is observed in terms of the nature of discrimination: whilst it is possible to encounter acts of prejudice and discrimination in both parts of Turkey, the reasons for encountering these acts differ depending on the part of Turkey the respondents are based in. These everyday experiences of prejudice and discrimination play a significant role in exhibiting forms of 'Kurdishness' through the process of boundary creation. This chapter will explore how different parts of Turkey generate these different contexts through which different forms of 'Kurdishness' could be formed. Chapter 6 will focus on the role of other contextual factors such as the family environment and the neighbourhood effect on manifestation of 'Kurdishness'.

[122] The full interview can be read online at http://www.duzceyerelhaber.com/roportaj-haberleri/20048-Muhsin-Kizilkaya-Turkce-edebiyat-bayragini-Kurt-yazarlar-yukseltti#.VZUZnEaZ7IU (16 September 2013) [Accessed 2 July 2015].

As was explained in Chapter 2, one of the reasons for conducting my fieldwork in different parts of Turkey was "intellectual curiosity" (Lofland, et al. 2006: 12) about whether 'Kurdishness' is manifested differently due to the different environmental surroundings in different regions. One incident I encountered during my fieldwork provides an illustration of the differences with regards to the use of the Kurdish language in public space: During my fieldwork, I had to take mini shuttle buses quite often to travel between Mardin and Derik. I was sitting near the driver's seat when one of the passengers from behind the shuttle asked (in Kurdish) the woman next to me to pass his money to the driver. The woman, looking at him with questioning eyes, asked him to repeat what he said, this time in Turkish. The man repeated his request in Turkish and the woman did what she was asked. After this, one of the men sitting next to the man said in a loud voice so that everybody could hear: "Why are you people speaking in Turkish?" (field notes, 30 April 2013). The fact that he said this in Turkish as well gave the impression that he wanted to be understood by the non-Kurdish speakers on the shuttle. Contrary to the Western part of Turkey where speaking Kurdish in public space is one of the reasons for encountering prejudice and discrimination, as will be exemplified later in the chapter, this suggests a significant difference in context. Another example of contextual differences is the photos below:



Picture 5.1: City centre of Diyarbakır, taken by the author on 3 May 2013.

Picture 5.2. The bilingual placard of the municipality in Diyarbakır (Source: *Hürriyet* 17 December 2013) [Accessed 2 July 2015].

The first photograph shows the placard of the Kurdish Academy of Language in Kurdish. The second photograph shows a bilingual placard of the municipality in Diyarbakır; the Kurdish translation was added in December 2013. The prominence of Kurdish language in the public space, as illustrated through above-mentioned examples, provides Southeastern part of Turkey a unique feature, different than the Western part of Turkey. As a researcher who was born and grew up in Istanbul, this difference could be observed from the moment I arrived in the Southeast part. This is an excerpt from my field notes on the day of my arrival in Mardin: "This place has a different feeling and you can even tell it in the first couple of hours…It is like you enter into a totally different country without going through passport control" (field notes, 12 April 2013). How do these differences have an impact on how 'Kurdishness' is manifested? That is, does a citizen of Turkey who was born and grew up in the Southeast part of Turkey and who has been exposed to Kurdish for most of his/her life differ in how he or she exhibits his or her 'Kurdishness' compared to another citizen who lives in the Western part of Turkey? Through these questions, this chapter will explore how different regions (research question 'c') play a role on the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'.

5.2. ‘Kurdishness’ as Cultural Attachment

The definitions of Turkish culture and Kurdish culture and whether they are very different from each other have been one of the discussion points for the respondents. Turkish culture has been described as “the major language and culture within the society” by Hasan from Mardin (interview, 17 April 2013), whereas Mahsun defines culture as “the habits of living and nothing else” (interview, 20 February 2013).

Language was identified as the key cultural marker by my respondents. Ten different respondents (İlhan, Hasan, Kadir, Dilan, Abdullah, Emir, Meryem, Murat, Halil and Emel) expressed the relationship between language and culture by mentioning the words ‘culture’ [*kültür*] and ‘language’ [*dil*] consecutively or by using them interchangeably. İlhan from Diyarbakır, for example, said that “today, Kurds are more protective of their language and their culture” and then, he continues by saying that “on the political and constitutional level, it is necessary to recognize the existence of the Kurdish peoples, their language and their culture” (interview, 22 April 2013). Dilan, born and grew up in Derik, described language as “the most important element of culture” (interview, 28 April 2013).

If adopting the language of another culture is part of the “acculturation” (Gordon 1964) process, then it would be reasonable to argue that all of the participants have been acculturated to a certain degree since all of them were fluent enough in Turkish to be interviewed in that language. This was made possible through the standardised education system that the Turkish state implemented that was explained in Chapter 3. That is, after a person starts school in Turkey, then he or she would *have to* learn the Turkish language. This could be considered as the inevitable product of attending the Turkish education system. As discussed in Chapter 2 when discussing the implications of interviewing in Turkish language, speaking and/or understanding Turkish language is the norm rather than exception for most individuals. Therefore, it could be argued that it is not the knowledge of Turkish language that generates significant differences amongst manifestations of ‘Kurdishness’.

One of the ways through which regions could play a role in generating different forms of ‘Kurdishness’ is observed when it comes to differentiating different

cultures: the feeling of having a 'unique' and a different culture than the Turkish one was evident amongst all of the respondents from Southeast Turkey. Murat is a primary school teacher who was born and grew up in Derik until he was 13, when he migrated to Istanbul with his family. After studying in Eskişehir[123] for his undergraduate studies, he came back to his hometown to teach. While talking about his observation that Turks do not want to live together with Kurds, he states:

> Do you know how *they* [Turks] want to live? *They* could live with Kurds if things were how they were 20 years ago. But as long as *we* insist on having *our* own culture, *our* own language, *our* own identity, on the fact that *we* are Kurds, *they* will not like this. *They* do not want to live like this (italics for emphasis, interview, 12 May 2013).

Meryem, a high-school student from Derik, also distinguishes Kurdish culture from Turkish culture to explain why her older sister chose to become a guerrilla by saying that "she is there [on the mountains] to protect *her* language, to protect *her* culture" (italics for emphasis, interview, 4 May 2013). Abdullah from Derik, also makes a similar distinction when talking about the system of village guards by saying that "they are there to protect *their* [Turks'] culture, *their* language" (italics added for emphasis, interview, 26 April 2013).

The case of Halil is another complex case: he was born in a small village in the province of Adıyaman[124] and lived there until he was 6, when his family moved to Mersin. He has been living in Istanbul since 1993, when he started working in the newspaper *Welat.*[125] He indirectly stated that Kurds have a different culture. When I asked his views on the establishment of *TRT 6*,[126] he started discussing the idea that culturally, Kurds are different:

> It looked like the aim of establishing such a channel was to offer an alternative to the already-existing 'separatist' [*bölücü*] channels and that is why it has created such a reaction amongst Kurds; they did not buy the idea of this channel and they did not see it as their own. Who accepted it? 'Conservative Kurds': Kurds who vote for AKP. The positive thing about this is that it has

[123] Eskişehir is a Central Anatolian city near Ankara. Murat described the environment there during his undergraduate studies by stating that "there were not many Kurds there" (interview, 12 May 2013).
[124] Adıyaman is a province in Southeast Turkey and is considered part of the homeland of Kurds.
[125] *Welat* is a daily Kurdish newspaper that started to be published in 1992. In 1996, it changed its name to *Azadiya Welat*, which still stands.
[126] *TRT 6*, the only state-funded TV channel that broadcasts exclusively in Kurdish, was discussed in Chapter 4.

> provided the 'Kurdification' of those Kurds who are loyal to AKP; they have become Kurds culturally (interview, 4 March 2013).

The language Halil uses is more abstract compared to the previous examples. That is, he does not provide certain clues as to how he positions himself with regards to those different cultures he mentions. The distinct usage of 'they' [*onlar*] and 'we' [*biz*] when discussing Turks and Kurds is non-existent unlike the interviews with Abdullah, Meryem and Murat. He does not use the 'we' [*biz*] pronoun when talking about either group of Kurds (the ones who did not buy the idea of *TRT 6* and the ones who accepted it). It is crucial; however, that he still recognizes the existence of differences between the two cultures by saying 'they have become Kurds culturally*'*. It is possible to see the effects of the fact that he lived in different parts of Turkey from the language he uses. In this sense, regions do influence the way individuals perceive culture and the fact of living in different parts of Turkey is reflected in the way individuals view differences.

Different forms of 'Kurdishness' were exhibited; however, even when it came to the relationship between language and culture. Some respondents exhibited a feeling of attachment both towards a separate Kurdish culture and towards the Kurdish language, whereas there were also occasions where the respondent exhibited attachment towards the Kurdish language while, at the same time, clearly denouncing the existence of a separate Kurdish culture. Consider this case of Mahsun: Mahsun was born, grew up and lived in Hakkari[127] until he was 18, when he moved to Istanbul for his undergraduate studies in 1981. In his narration, it is possible to observe an ambiguous relationship with regards to cultures:

> What we call 'culture' is the habits of living and nothing else. Now, Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Arabs, they all live within the same culture and you cannot differentiate these. *Lahmacun* [the fast-food that is known as 'Turkish Pizza' outside of Turkey], for example, is it a Turkish food, Kurdish food or an Arabian food? We cannot know that. A Turk spits on the floor; a Kurd also spits on the floor. A Turk beats his wife; a Kurd also beats his wife. What is the only difference? Their languages (interview, 20 February 2013).

[127] Hakkari is a province in the Southeast corner of Turkey and is considered part of the Kurdish homeland.

In this case, the boundaries between the two cultures, for Mahsun, is erased in all but one element: language. He is attached to Kurdish language but other than that, he does not see any attachment to any cultural elements of 'Kurdishness'. What Mahsun is exhibiting here is a different form of 'Kurdishness' that is exhibited in terms of linguistic attachment (in Chapter 4, his demand to have education in mother tongue was also discussed). Regional context explains his indifference towards cultures to a certain extent, yet to understand his attachment to Kurdish language, other contextual factors should also be taken into account, which will be analysed in Chapter 6.

What happens, though, when an individual is not a native speaker of Kurdish? The case of Emel provides another form of 'Kurdishness' that could be manifested by individuals, suggesting the importance of language for the perceptions of belonging to Kurdish culture. She was born, grew up and spent her childhood and youth in Sivas, a Central Anatolian town that has a considerable Alevi population and then, lived in Istanbul and Adapazarı[128] for 22 years before she moved to Ayvalık. Having lived in different parts of Turkey (but never in Southeast), she unquestionably recognizes the existence of different cultures ("I have been going to the Southeast for seven years now and I can see that we are from different cultures"), yet she does not see herself as having the same culture as those living in Southeast Turkey either ("even though I identify myself as Kurd, I do not have the same culture", interview, 5 June 2014). If language is considered a part of the culture, according to some of the respondents, then the fact that Emel is not fluent in Kurdish language could be one of the explanations for her perception of belonging to a different culture.

'Kurdishness' as cultural attachment amongst the respondents, then, to summarise, could manifest itself in variant forms: there are occasions where individuals perceive no significant differences between cultures; there are cases where the existence of different cultures is recognised but that individuals do not perceive themselves being attached to a certain one, and there are cases where individuals do not perceive themselves belonging to a certain culture, yet they are attached to Kurdish language and make conscious efforts to protect the Kurdish language. The role that different

[128] Adapazarı is a neighbouring province of Istanbul.

regions play on these different forms is observed when distinguishing between different cultures: all of the respondents from Southeast Turkey expressed clearly that Kurds have their own culture that is different than the Turkish one, whereas for the respondents from Western Turkey, this was not clear. This section aimed to show these different forms through which 'Kurdishness' is manifested.

5.3. 'Kurdishness' as Identification

Another way through which 'Kurdishness' was manifested amongst the respondents is through identifying themselves as Kurds or not. Barth's concept of "ascription" (1969) and Brubaker and Cooper's concept of "identification" (2000) are useful to explain this form of 'Kurdishness'. In this section, I will show the ways through which identification of oneself as 'Kurd' is possible. In the previous section, the dichotomy of Turkish culture, "high culture" (Gellner 1983), versus Kurdish culture was discussed. Is it possible to talk about a straightforward relationship between the views on culture and how an individual identifies himself or herself? Based on the data this section will reveal, the answer would be 'no'. In fact, only one respondent out of 33 expressed that she does not identify herself as 'Kurd'. What does this reveal? This section will show that identification of one's self as a Kurd is possible through two ways. Firstly, it is through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) or self-identification that one identifies as a Kurd. Secondly, identification of one's self by others is one of the means of identification. In this discussion, the concept of 'half-Kurd' will be introduced.

5.3.1. Self-Identification

This section will show that it is still possible for someone to identify himself or herself as Kurdish in Ayvalık and in Istanbul (as will be exemplified below) in their social interactions but the context and the meaning is quite distinct. This way, it will also prepare for the discussion in the following section. "Informal, everyday discrimination" (Wimmer 2013: 75), which will be illustrated in the following section, is significant in the (re-)shaping and in the (re-)construction of the

boundaries of 'Kurdishness'. Elif, a young woman from Derik who works for a women's organisation there, emphasized the importance of this when she talked about her brother's military service:

> If you go to such a place [where there are negative perceptions towards Kurds], you would be more aware of your Kurdish identity even if you were assimilated before. People there were told that 'Kurds are terrorists, Kurds are barbarians, Kurds have tails'[129] and they accept this without questioning. That is why a Kurd there, no matter how much he speaks Turkish, no matter how many times he denies his identity, will always be a Kurd there and he will be treated as such. Then, he would realize that he is a Kurd (interview, 10 May 2013).

İlhan from Diyarbakır had a similar experience on how he first perceived himself as a Kurd:

> In our village, nobody spoke Turkish and they would dress differently. And then, we would go to the big city and see that Turkish is spoken there; there would be the police there, the army there. They would look down on *us* there, humiliate *us* and that would lead *us* search for *our* identity. That is when we realized that *we* were Kurds (italics for emphasis, interview, 22 April 2013).

Another respondent from Ayvalık, Reyhan, stated that she defines herself as a 'Kurd' even though she is "linguistically assimilated". That is, she is not as fluent in Kurdish language as she could be even though both her parents are Kurdish-speakers since she grew up in Adana[130] and "the language that was spoken in school and outside [Turkish] was more dominant" (group interview, 19 June 2014). This is a good case of how the neighbourhood could influence manifestations of 'Kurdishness', which will be discussed in the next chapter. What is important for the purposes of this section is the fact that even when fluency in the Kurdish language is not present, 'Kurdishness' is manifested through self-identification. Another example of this was Burak, a high-school student who grew up in Ayvalık, who had just started being competent in the Kurdish language and who distinguished himself from "his other friends who were Turkish" (interview, 5 June 2014). Halil, who has been based in Istanbul since 1993 and who was introduced in the previous section, also mentioned

[129] 'Kurds with tails' is another one of the myths that were spreadout throughout Turkey to further 'otherize' Kurds. Orhan Doğan, a Kurdish lawyer and politician, told in his interview that some students in his highschool in Nazilli (a town on the Aegean Coast of Turkey) checked under his coat to see if he had actual 'tails' (http://www.internethaber.com/nazillide-kuyruklu-kurt-olmak-77300h.htm) (02 April 2007) [Accessed 05 July 2015].

[130] Adana, the fifth most populous city in Turkey, is situated on the Mediterranean Coast and is not considered part of the homeland of Kurds.

the emergence of a new group of people "who do not know one word of Kurdish, yet could sacrifice themselves for the cause" and hence that "Kurdish identity [*Kürt kimliği*] has become clearer compared to the past" (interview, 4 March 2013). Aras argues in his book that "the state has failed to Turkify or integrate/assimilate its Kurdish citizens" through those policies aimed at incorporating Kurds, with all the other 'non-Turkish' groups, into a 'higher culture' (2014: 195). The statement of Reyhan, coupled with the previous examples of Emel and Burak, provides an insight into why this might be the case. In Chapter 3, the policies of the Kemalist state were discussed which aimed at suppressing Kurdish language. If the Kurdish language and other elements associated with the Kurdish culture were suppressed, the Kemalist leaders thought, then it would be easier to convert them into 'the ideal Turks'. The statements of the respondents; however, suggest that as a response to those policies of the nation-state aimed at making Kurds forget their language, they have constructed a form of 'Kurdishness' that is not based on the Kurdish language.

Mahsun, who was introduced in the previous section, was also adamant that he be identified as a Kurd. Even though he does not see any crucial difference between Turks and Kurds in terms of objective cultural indicators (illustrated in the previous section), he identifies himself as a Kurd:

> [When talking about the environment in the school where his daughter goes to in Istanbul] It is nice. But of course, it also depends on the attitude that you are showing…Everybody would be bothered if they see the manifestations of other nationalisms. If I go there and say, 'I am a Kurd and this is Kurdistan', of course people would react to this. I would also react if someone says, 'this is the land of Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] and you cannot speak Kurdish here' (interview, 20 February 2013).

Even though his perception that other people might react when he lets his identity be known to other people makes him modify his behaviour, which will be discussed in more detail in the next sections, the way he identifies himself is still a Kurd. This is a crucial point in further understanding the different forms of 'Kurdishness' and its contextual nature: one of the questions that this research was interested in is the role that language plays in manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. One of the answers to this question, based on the discussion so far, is that Kurdish language is not *sine qua non* for the establishment of forms of 'Kurdishness'. Mahsun is aware of the importance

of the Kurdish language, yet other elements of Kurdish culture are not that crucial to him (see his quotation on p. 140). Here, then, it is possible to see an example of someone identifying himself as a Kurd without necessarily being attached to its culture.

The responses on *Andımız,*[131] 'Our Oath', amongst the respondents provide another, albeit more subtle, source through which identification could be manifested. In addition to the mandatory activity of reading *Andımız* out loud every morning in the schoolyards, the Turkish state put additional efforts to make *Andımız* part of the everyday life for Kurds. When I travelled between Mardin and Derik during my fieldwork, I saw the inscriptions of the very last sentence of *Andımız* 'how happy for the one who says 'I am a Turk'' on the mountains. When I asked people about it, it was said that those inscriptions had been there since the military coup in 1980 (field notes, 30 April 2013). Related to the discussion in Chapter 3, this could be interpreted as another attempt at converting Kurds into 'the ideal Turks'. The reactions to *Andımız* have been similar regardless of whether the respondent is from the West or Southeast; Meryem, who was born and grew up in Derik, said that she "felt it difficult to read *Andımız* when she was old enough to understand what it means" (interview, 4 May 2013), whereas Burak, who grew up in Ayvalık, said that he "felt relieved when *Andımız* was abolished" (interview, 5 June 2014). Similarly Arif, who had just finished high school in Ayvalık, jokingly said that he and his friends in high school "used to say 'how happy is the one who says "I am Kurdish"'" (interview, 5 June 2014), whereas Ebru, born and grew up in Derik, also joked that she and her friends from high school used to "change the words to 'I am Kurd, honest, and hardworking'" (interview, 5 May 2013).

Another manifestation of respondents' identification as Kurds is their responses to Article 66 of Turkish Constitution. Article 66 states that "everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk" and the controversy surrounding this article lies in the "discord between the texts defining Turkish

[131] In Chapter 4, it was stated that this policy was abolished in September 2013 by the AKP government.

citizenship and the practice of Turkish citizenship" (Yeğen 2004: 55). Amongst the respondents; however, there was no question regarding the interpretation of this article: it was an ethnic definition of citizenship, which does not take into account the 'non-Turkish' population within the society. Or, as was discussed in Chapter 3, for the nation-state, this article was the reinforcement of the idea that Kurds were actually 'Turks who just needed to be reminded of their forgotten language and culture'. Ali, born and grew up in Derik, expressed his frustration at this Article and its implications by saying:

> I can accept the notion of *Türkiyelilik,*[132] or the idea of a place within Turkey where Kurds and Turks could live together without any conflict, but I do not find it right that a nation under the name of Turk establishes a control mechanism over Kurds; I cannot stand this (interview, 28 April 2013).

Ebru from Derik stated that she "always feels bad when she sees the constitutional definition of 'Turkish nation' because she is not a Turk" (interview, 5 May 2013). Murat from Derik was not convinced that the Article 66 is not defined along ethnic lines ("The concept of 'Turk' does not include all the ethnic groups within Turkey. It does not include me, for instance, because I do not feel Turkish…It would be better if it was 'the peoples of Turkey' [*Türkiye halkları*]", interview, 12 May 2013); Meryem from Derik expressed that she is "not included in that definition because if she was, she would be in the same situation as Turks" (interview, 4 May 2013) and Dilan from Derik, similar to Murat, suggested that it should be changed to 'the peoples of Turkey' [*Türkiye halkları*] to make it more inclusive because the way it is does not include her (interview, 28 April 2013). Emir from Ayvalık told this: "I can only speak on my behalf. I am neither proud nor ashamed of being Kurdish. When they [Turks] ask me about this, I always insist that I am a Kurd". In fact, he later joked about the fact that he cannot bring himself saying that he is a Turk when his Turkish friends insist (interview, 28 February 2013).

As stated in the beginning of this section, only 1 respondent stated that she does not see herself as Kurd. Arzu, one of the respondents I interacted in Ayvalık, stated that she "does not define herself as Kurd because sociologically, she does not feel like

[132] *Türkiyelilik* literally translates as 'being from Turkey' and it refers to a more umbrella term for all the citizens of Turkey regardless of their ethnic background.

that" when I specifically asked her how she would define herself (group interview, 19 June 2014). Her grandparents were amongst those who were forced to migrate out of Dersim during the incidents of 1937-38, and she herself grew up in Izmir, her native language being Turkish. She is now married to a Kurd in Ayvalık and has started learning Kurdish. During my time in Ayvalık, I was told about an old person who experienced first-hand the incidents of Dersim and who now lives in one of the small islands near Ayvalık (field notes, 19 June 2014). Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to interview him since he did not want to talk to anyone, especially about his past. Arzu, when I asked her about him, suggested that "he probably does not want to go through it again because it was a lot of pain and suffering" (group interview, 19 June 2014). She expressed that by saying "Turkish is spoken in my family. During those times [during the displacement of people], Turkish was forced upon people and they became all Kemalists and supporters of CHP" (group interview, 19 June 2014). This paves the way for the discussion in Chapter 6, where the influence of family environment and of the neighbourhood will be discussed in more detail. On the contrary, Emir from Ayvalık said that he and his other fellow Kurds "had suffered so much because of this language [Turkish] that they should not speak it at all" (interview, 28 February 2013). All these experiences suggest that identification of one's self as a Kurd is *contextual*.

5.3.2. Identification by Others: Being a 'Half-Kurd'

Self-identification or "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) is not the only way through which identification is possible. Apart from self-identification, there are also occasions where people are identified by others. There are occasions where even the extent to which one could be identified as a 'Kurd' was determined by others as the following incident I encountered during my fieldwork suggests: during one of my visits to the Ayvalık branch of HDP, a group of people, some of them native speakers of Kurdish and the others non-native speakers, were having an informal chat in Turkish when the discussion suddenly turned to 'how to name the days of the week in Kurdish'. When the non-native speakers had trouble remembering some of the Kurdish words, they were immediately called 'half-Kurds' [*yarım Kürt*] by those

who could (field notes, 2 June 2014). Emel, who was introduced in the previous section and did not have feelings of attachment towards a certain 'Kurdish culture', was in that group that was referred to as a 'half-Kurd'. In fact, she narrated in our follow-up conversations other occasions where she was referred to as a 'half-Kurd': "Sometimes when I try to speak Kurdish, some people tell me, 'nevermind, do not even try to speak Kurdish, you cannot manage it anyway, you are 'half-Kurd'. And sometimes, this hurts" (interview, 5 June 2014). However, she does not hesitate to identify herself as a Kurd: "I grew up always being aware of my Kurdish identity; I have always been aware of it. I am now as well" and "I do not feel less Kurdish just because I cannot speak Kurdish" (interview, 5 June 2014) are manifestations of how she perceives herself as Kurd. In fact, in my follow-up conversations with her, she jokingly suggested that I should describe her as a Kurd who has not lost her identity despite not being from the Southeast (field notes, 10 June 2014). This case suggests the independence of these two different means of identification: even though Emel is referred to as a 'half-Kurd' by others, it is clear that she identifies herself as a Kurd through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969).

The first two sections in this chapter so far showed the different ways through which 'Kurdishness' is exhibited. In showing that, I discussed the role that regions play on different manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. When it comes to manifestation of 'Kurdishness' through attachment to a certain Kurdish culture, however it is defined, it is possible to see a straightforward pattern amongst the respondents with regards to the regions they are based in: all of the respondents from Southeast Turkey expressed some sort of belongingness to a distinct Kurdish culture, whereas for the respondents from the Western part, it was more complicated. Manifestations of 'Kurdishness' through identification is explained through the use of the literature on boundary interaction. Through the means of "self-ascription" (Barth 1969), individuals who are referred to as 'half-Kurds' are able to manifest their own forms of 'Kurdishness' through identifying themselves as Kurds. The discussion so far, then, suggests the influence of regions on different manifestations of 'Kurdishness' and illustrated how one of the means of boundary-making is effective. The following discussion will introduce another means of boundary making: encounters of prejudice and discrimination. While doing that, the role of being located in different parts of

Turkey will again be observed: even though it is possible for individuals located in either part of Turkey to encounter acts of prejudice and discrimination, the content of these acts differs depending on where the individual is based in.

5.4. 'Kurdishness' and Encounters of Prejudice and Discrimination

This section discusses how forms of 'Kurdishness' are constructed through the experiences of prejudice and discrimination in everyday interactions. In social psychology literature, prejudice is defined as "any attitude, emotion or behaviour towards members of a group, which directly or indirectly implies some negativity or antipathy towards that group" (Brown 2010: 7). As will be shown throughout this section, all those three aspects in Brown's definition of prejudice (attitudes, emotions or behaviours) are existent and applicable to the case in question. Discrimination is a concept that is considered in relation to prejudice (Correll, et al. 2010; Harley, Rollins and Middleton 1999; Thornicroft, et al. 2007), yet there could also be types of discriminatory acts without any kind of prejudiced attitudes or emotions (Blood, Jr. 1955). To clarify the concept for the purposes of this section, I borrow the definition in SAGE Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination, where it is defined as "behaviours directed towards category members that is consequential for their outcomes, and that is directed toward them not because of any particular deservingness or reciprocity, but simply because they happen to be members of that category" (Correll, et al. 2010: 46).

Wimmer discusses "informal, everyday discrimination" (2013: 75) as one of the means of ethnic boundary making. This section, through narratives of the respondents, will illustrate that 'Kurdishness' is constructed through these acts of everyday prejudice and discrimination. In line with the overarching argument of this thesis that forms of 'Kurdishness' differ across different contexts, this section will show how different regions generate these different contexts, which are reflected within the encounters of prejudice and discrimination. Here, it is important to clarify that what I am interested in, for the purposes of this section, is not whether or not these perceptions of the respondents are, in fact, a reality. However, the important

criterion for me is whether the respondents I have interacted perceive them as prejudices or discriminatory acts. Ibrahim emphasized this point himself by saying that "the problem itself is having to wonder whether you would have a reaction when you speak Kurdish" (interview, 26 February 2013). The focus, for the purposes of this section, is simply on experiences of prejudice and discrimination.

Since prejudice and discrimination are directed towards the members of certain groups, as defined above, one condition of encountering prejudice and discrimination should be that other people be aware that you are a member of that certain group. How is this possible in the case of the respondents? Even though the skin colour could sometimes be a differentiating factor as people from Southeast Turkey tend to have a darker skin colour than others, the physical appearance is usually not considered a significant factor in the establishment of (possible) prejudices. The physical appearance is, most of the time, not the most reliable standard of measurement. The accent when speaking Turkish, then, becomes the more objective criterion for showing prejudice and discrimination. Non-native speakers of Turkish have a different accent from native speakers of Turkish. Emir gave a more specific description of the differences in pronunciation between native- and non-native speakers by saying that "*we* are different even biologically; *we* pronounce 'ğ'[133] in a harsher way and it is not like that in Turkish language" (italics for emphasis, interview, 28 February 2013). Abdurrahman, born and grew up in Derik, studied his undergraduate in Ankara and lived in Istanbul for a while after his graduation. Living in two of the biggest cities in Turkey, he encountered many incidents where his accent was recognised as Kurdish. He mentioned this by saying that "I would go to Istanbul and I would speak two words [of Turkish] and they would notice that I am a Kurd" (interview, 10 May 2013). Ebru, who was born and grew up in Derik, told me about her daily struggles when she looks for jobs at banks in the Southeast region.

> *We* all speak Kurdish until *we* go to primary school and *we* learn Turkish at school. And of course, this is a disadvantage for *us* because *we* are competing with people from the West [Western Turkey] in this sense. Compared to *them*, *our* accent is not good; in fact, it is terrible for most of *us*. Then of course, the banks would not hire *us* since *we* are so behind *them*. For instance, if I get 90 in

[133] This is the soft 'g' letter that is specific to Turkish language and it does not exist in Kurdish language.

> the written exam and the person from the West gets 75, he would still be more convincing in the interview and the bank would be more likely to hire him instead of me (italics for emphasis, interview, 5 May 2013).

This type of prejudice against the 'Kurdish accent' could be observed in the public space as well. One of the most recent instances happened in February 2013, when the then-spokesperson for CHP, Haluk Koç, while criticizing the members of the pro-Kurdish party BDP for their actions, used the phrase "with their rough Turkish".[134]

What is essential for the purposes of this section is that individuals either from Western or Southeast part of Turkey encounter acts of prejudice and discrimination as a "means of ethnic boundary making" (Wimmer 2013), yet as will be illustrated below, due to different markers varied across different regions. The difference in accents that was mentioned above, for instance, is not very visible for an individual who is born and grew up in the Western part of Turkey. As will be illustrated shortly, for individuals living in the Western part of Turkey, the reasons for discrimination vary. One incident I encountered in Istanbul during my fieldwork illustrates the type of encounters of discrimination and prejudice individuals receive in the Western part of Turkey. When I was staying in the flat of a close acquaintance, me and the mother of my acquaintance, who defines herself as a Turk having been born and grown up in Ankara, we were having a casual chat. When I told her that I was going to leave for Southeast region soon, she told me to "be careful" there and then, narrated the story from the period when she was a newly-wed:

> We, as people living in the West, assume that the state is not existent in the Southeast; that the state does not help the people there. But when we first got married, we lived in Tunceli[135] and Diyarbakır for a while and there was this

[134] The full statement in Turkish can be read at http://www.ensonhaber.com/haluk-koc-bdpliler-o-kaba-turkceleriyle-2013-02-21.html [Accessed 06 July 2015].

[135] As was explained in Chapter 3, 'Tunceli' is the official Turkish name given to Dersim in 1935. Even though the provinces covered by the names *Tunceli* and *Dersim* are geographically not exactly the same, the usage of those two names, like most of the other names for Kurdish places, depends more on the political context. Citizens who are attached to the ideals of the early Republican state use Tunceli, whereas people who are sympathetic to the Kurdish National Movement use Dersim. This point was further exemplified by Dilan, one of the respondents from Derik, when she said that "what Kurds want is to use the word 'Dersim' instead of 'Tunceli'... These things might seem trivial but Kurds have called that place Dersim for centuries and now, whenever we hear the word 'Tunceli', we go through emotions" (interview, 28 April 2013). Therefore, the use of the name 'Tunceli' instead of Dersim in this narrative is crucial in showing the political orientations of this respondent.

> idealist doctor who just had been appointed there. After a while, terrorists[136] hung him on the main square of the town (field notes, 01 March 2013).

This story she narrated, for her, was the justification for why I should be careful when I go to Southeast because it is full of 'terrorists'. Another incident that happened shortly after shows some of the prejudices that are targeted against people from Southeast Turkey living in Istanbul: the son of the mother from the previous narrative was beaten up by a random group of people in a café in Istanbul. His older sister, who identifies herself as a Turk, born and grew up in Istanbul, narrated the story to me. During our conversation, she told me that she was not surprised to see her brother beaten up by those people "because they were speaking with the accent", implying that they were, most probably, of Kurdish descent (field notes, 10 March 2013). These cases are examples for the *emotional* aspect of prejudice. They do not act on these feelings, yet they do make it clear that they have these emotions against a certain group of people, which is Kurds. These two incidents reveal some of the perceptions that people living in the Western part of Turkey have against Kurds: first of all, most Kurds living in the Southeast part of Turkey are seen by Turks living in Western part of Turkey as 'terrorists'. Secondly, the fact that the sister was not surprised that her brother was beaten up by people speaking with 'the accent' suggests that she perceives people from the Southeast Turkey[137] as some sort of hooligans.

Being prejudiced against, emotionally or attitudinally, is something that the respondents mostly encountered during the course of everyday life and as shown on previous examples, it is possible to experience it even when they speak Turkish due to their accents. Another situation where the respondents experience prejudice is when they speak in their mother language. The influence of living in different parts of Turkey is again observed regarding speaking Kurdish in public spaces. In fact, it was even possible to observe differences across field sites within the Southeast Turkey. In Derik, encountering prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviours for speaking Kurdish was not common as the everyday life was dominated by

[136] By 'terrorists' here, the person refers to PKK guerrillas.
[137] The fact that those people were speaking Turkish with an accent implies, as mentioned above, that they were not from Western part of Turkey.

Kurdish language. During my stay there, I was one of the few people who did not or could not speak the Kurdish language in everyday conversations (field notes, 26 April 2013). Mardin, due to its different demographic characteristics that was discussed in Chapter 2, is a place where it is possible to hear different languages in everyday life without any type of prejudiced reactions (field notes, 15 April 2013). That does not mean; however, that the respondents do not experience any type of prejudiced attitude or discriminatory behaviour in Mardin. Even there, it is possible to encounter incidents where people experience prejudice and discrimination due to the language they speak. Hasan, a high school teacher who was born and grew up in a small village in Mardin, narrates the story of how, from Turks' point of view, some perceptions regarding the Kurdish language are still the same:

> For instance, we are at school talking to other colleagues in Kurdish. Then, one Turk comes to us and says, 'why are you speaking in Kurdish? I do not comprehend what you are saying'. At first, what he says seems really humane: The poor guy does not understand our conversation but it is actually a matter of perception. They think, 'I should understand'. Why? He thinks he belongs to the major language and culture; since we live in Turkey, he has to be the one who comprehends. You do not have to comprehend! Or learn Kurdish so you would also comprehend what we are talking about!...One of the experiences I had was with a guy who defined himself as a socialist. He would say, 'as a socialist, I defend the right to self-determination for Kurds' but when he comes here and fights alongside his Kurdish comrades, he would say 'I do not understand what you are talking about, you are speaking in Kurdish' (interview, 17 April 2013).

This suggests that when it comes to encountering prejudices and discrimination due to the language an individual speaks, the location or the region you are from within Turkey plays a significant role. Even though there are many different languages spoken in Mardin, the existence of a Turkish speaker changes the dynamics within the group. An individual receiving prejudiced attitudes and/or being discriminated against because he or she speaks Kurdish would still be less likely in Derik than in Mardin even though one (Derik) is a district of the other (Mardin). Diyarbakır is also similar to Mardin in this regard. As described in the beginning of this chapter, Diyarbakır has features that makes the city a 'Kurdish' place, especially with the more frequent usage of placard in Kurdish language. Güvenç (2011) illustrates the use of public space and urban parks in the establishment of a Kurdish nationalism in Diyarbakır. The usage of Kurdish language in everyday life; however, is surprisingly

less common than what would be expected. Ayşe, who works for the municipality of Diyarbakır, was one of the respondents I frequently interacted with during my visits there. One day, when we were going to the municipality where her husband also works, we stopped by a patisserie on our way. While she was ordering our desserts, she interacted with the cashier in Turkish and the cashier was taking notes on a sheet of paper in Turkish yet with Kurdish letters.[138] Later, I asked her why she and the cashier did not talk to each other in Kurdish even though the cashier could probably also speak Kurdish. She responded by saying that even though nothing would have happened had they spoken in Kurdish, Kurdish is still not common in public space, unlike a place such as Derik (interview, 30 April 2013). Abdullah from Derik expressed a similar opinion by saying that "Kurdish is not spoken in Diyarbakır. As much as we say it is, it is not spoken. It is spoken at homes but outside, it has just started to be spoken" (interview, 26 April 2013).

When it comes to the Western part of Turkey, regarding prejudices and being discriminated against when one speaks Kurdish, two respondents (Arif and Halil) stated that they have not encountered many problems when speaking Kurdish in public space. Arif, whose parents moved to Ayvalık from Mardin when he was 2 years old, stated that he could express himself freely now even though he had some tough times in the primary school: "I can say that 'I am Kurd' now freely and I can speak Kurdish. I think that here [Ayvalık] is a comfortable place in that way" (interview, 5 June 2014). He also similarly stated that he could freely speak Kurdish in Istanbul and that he feels as if he is in Kurdistan whenever he visits Istanbul (interview, 5 June 2014). This is related to Arif's work environment in Ayvalık, the effects of which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Halil, who has been working as a journalist in the newspaper *Welat* in Istanbul since 1993, stated that he talks in Kurdish within his group of friends when he is outside and he has never received any negative attention. He stated that the comfort in Istanbul with regards to speaking Kurdish is not existent even in the capital city of Ankara and he even jokes that he

[138] *Kurmancî*, the dialect of Kurdish language that is spoken in Diyarbakır, uses the Latin alphabet as does Turkish language. There are; however, 6 different letters in *Kurmancî* than in Turkish: ê, î, û, q, w, and x. The usage of some of those letters by the cashier led me to think that he was probably a native speaker of Kurdish.

interacts in Kurdish more in Istanbul than he does in Diyarbakır (interview, 4 March 2013).

Other respondents from the Western part of Turkey; however, narrated their stories of discrimination and prejudice with regards to the use of the Kurdish language in public space. Emir from Ayvalık narrated this story: he and another friend he defined as Kurd were in a bank. The account officer in the bank was getting frustrated when his friend did not exactly understand what he was saying and the officer said, 'why do you not comprehend? Are you Kurdish?' (interview, 28 February 2013). Reyhan from Ayvalık narrated the story of her brother and how, one month after he came back from his compulsory military service, the police stopped his car because he was listening to a Kurdish song on his radio. He, then, spent the night at the police station being tortured throughout the night only to be released the next day (group interview, 19 June 2014). Ibrahim, who has been living in Ayvalık for almost 20 years, confirmed Emir's experiences by telling me that "some of his friends were told in the city centre of Ayvalık, 'why are you speaking Kurdish? Kurdish is not spoken here, go back to where you are from!'". He describes the general attitude towards the usage of Kurdish language and towards their accent by saying:

> *We* automatically become 'separatist' [*bölücü*] when *we* speak Kurdish even if *we* say something like 'men and women should be equal'. Today, many people in Turkey do not attend the march on International Women's Day or International Workers' Day due to high numbers of Kurdish people in the protests (italics for emphasis, interview, 26 February 2013).

Ahmet and Mehmet, two students studying in Artuklu University in Mardin, both emphasized the fact that Turks are still very prejudiced [*önyargılı*] and whenever they are in Istanbul or in any other Western city, they are still looked at in the subway or in any other public space if they speak Kurdish. Ahmet continued:

> Once I was in Istanbul and I, along with 5 or 6 other Kurdish friends, was sitting at a table. There were also a couple of Turks at the table, so it was weird that Kurds would speak to each other in Turkish. *We* always speak in Kurdish but when Turks are around *us*, *we* have to speak in Turkish (italics for emphasis, group interview, 26 April 2013).

Hasan, who lives in Mardin, told that how he could visualize where his brother, who resides in Istanbul, is at that moment when they talk on the phone: if his brother talks

to him in Kurdish, that means he is home, but if he speaks in Turkish, he must be at his workplace. He, then, added that he also senses the anger of people when he is in Istanbul when he talks on the phone in Kurdish (interview, 17 April 2013). İlhan tells the stories of his relatives who went to the Western part of Turkey during the seasonal migration and how they are pressured by their environment to not speak their own language (interview, 22 April 2013). Murat, who was born and grew up in Derik but moved to Istanbul with his family when he was around 13 years old, told about his experiences in Istanbul. His experience there was that he "felt that people were looking at him with a judgmental look if he spoke Kurdish on a train, on a bus etc." (interview, 12 May 2013).

The organisation of marches and protests on special days provides opportunities to observe discriminatory behaviours, if any, targeted at specific groups. In Ayvalık, this was all the more apparent when there was an occasion that different groups want to commemorate or celebrate. Emel, who is a delegate for the Ayvalık branch of HDP, said that things still have not changed much when it comes to attitudes and emotions targeted at the use of Kurdish language in public space. She narrates her experience of International Women's Day in 2014:

> Because it was International Women's Day, we [HDP] wanted to celebrate it without excluding any woman or any organisation; despite everything, we still wanted to celebrate it all together. We had a meeting together with the *ulusalcı*[139] group and they only had one condition: they did not want any slogan in Kurdish language. In fact, we invited people from all ethnicities: Greeks, Armenians, Bosnians… and we had slogans and banners in all of those languages. But the *ulusalcı* group allowed all those other languages except the Kurdish one. So, we had to celebrate separately from them as was the case in the last years (interview, 5 June 2014).

Again, another delegate, Hakan, told that they were, for the first time in Ayvalık, able to celebrate *Newroz* but he thought that this was only possible due to the upcoming local elections and even then, they had to celebrate it in a separate district where

[139] *Ulusalcı* is the name given to the neo-nationalist group that has emerged in Turkish politics in the recent years, which is based on three basic ideas: anti-Westernism, externalisation of Islam from Turkish nationalism, and ethnic exclusionism (Uslu 2008). Officially, they are not affiliated to any parties, yet what the respondent here refers to is the *Ulusalcı* group within CHP.

immigrants from Southeast Turkey predominate instead of the town centre[140] (field notes, 5 June 2014).

Speaking Kurdish in public spaces or speaking Turkish with a different accent are not the only occasions where individuals encounter prejudice and discrimination. An individual who is born and grew up in Western Turkey is more likely to be a native speaker of Turkish or more likely to speak Turkish with an accent similar to native speakers.[141] However, those individuals also face prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives. Emir illustrates this point by referring to his daughter who is born in Ayvalık and who is not even fluent in Kurdish language (due to her mother being a Turk) and her experiences in the school suggest that prejudice and discrimination are not only about the use of the Kurdish language in public space. Just because of his daughter's name, he said, the teachers would be prejudiced [*önyargılı*] against her (interview, 28 February 2013). Related to the literature on boundary-making, this example suggests that names could also become boundary markers.

Apart from names, ethnic origins could be another one of the boundary markers for the respondents living in Western Turkey. That is, the fact that someone is ethnically Kurd, regardless of the language he or she speaks or the accent in which he or she speaks Turkish, could be the reason for encountering prejudice and discrimination. In Ayvalık, many respondents narrated stories of prejudice and discrimination that they had received throughout the years, independent of the language they speak or with which accent they speak Turkish. Emir described his daily experiences in public space in these words:

> We would go to Teachers' Lodge and there would be colleagues there from the Union. I could feel that their blood pressure would rise up when they see us. We do not harm anything nor anyone but even our existence would bother some people. Or, I am sure you have witnessed this [in Ayvalık] as well: if some people speak in English in the market, they are always envied and people would say, 'oh, how nice that they speak English'. But when we speak in

[140] The name of this district was *Yenimahalle*, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
[141] This, again, shows variances amongst the respondents. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, family environment is one of the factors influencing these differences and Mahsun's case will show how his children, born and raised in Istanbul, grow up to be native speakers of Kurdish due to his and his wife's insistence to talk to them in Kurdish.

> Kurdish, they immediately become grumpy…Once, we were again at Teachers' Lodge having a casual chat about random stuff and suddenly, one colleague said, 'do you encounter any problems here [even though you are Kurdish]?' I mean, even if you talk about football, he wanted to bring the topic to this because he wanted to say something but he could not. It does not change anything when a Kurd also prays or even votes for the same party; it is enough that someone is a Kurd (interview, 28 February 2013).

Another example of prejudice in Ayvalık is that during my stay there, I was also told of how most immigrants from Southeast Turkey to Ayvalık either work as teachers or work as construction workers. In fact, almost all construction workers in the town are immigrants from Southeast Turkey (field notes, 26 February 2013).[142]

Arif from Ayvalık, who previously stated that he could now express himself freely as a Kurd and could speak in Kurdish in Ayvalık, had encountered discriminatory behaviours when he went to Balıkesir due to his ethnic origins.[143] He told the story of how he is often discriminated in the job sector when he goes there:

> I got fired from 10 different jobs there because I was a Kurd. How do they do that? I go to a job interview; we get along well; they tell me, 'you got the job'. At the end of the interview, they would casually ask me where I am from and I would say, 'I am from Mardin'.[144] Then, they would find an excuse: for instance, they would say that their family member is more suitable for the job and they would send me away (interview, 5 June 2014).

Different than someone who lives in Southeast Turkey, Arif encounters discrimination here due to his origins. Similarly, Emel, who was introduced earlier as a non-native speaker of Kurdish, told that she could not be appointed to the town in Adapazarı for nine straight years when she was working as a teacher in a village nearby just because of her Kurdish descent (field notes, 5 June 2014). Ibrahim told me stories from ten years ago when people from Ayvalık and its neighbouring towns

[142] I was hesitant whether or not this information suggests a type of prejudice. At the end; however, I decided that it could be considered a type of prejudice since it shows stigma regarding immigrants from Southeast Turkey and what type of professions they would occupy (at least in that specific town). Here, I make use of the psychiatry literature on stigma and its relation to prejudice (Thornicroft, et al. 2007).

[143] What the respondent refers to here is the city of Balıkesir that is located in the Province of Balıkesir. Ayvalık, where he has been living, is also one of the cities that is located within the Province of Balıkesir. It takes approximately 2 hours by car between Ayvalık and Balıkesir.

[144] The parents of this respondent migrated to Ayvalık from Mardin when he was 2 years old. So, even though he grew up in Ayvalık, he still identifies with his parents' hometown and tells people that he is from there.

all gathered to throw stones at the houses where Kurds live. He even claimed that the mayor of one of the neighbouring towns, Sarımsaklı, was even helping with the transportation of people (interview, 26 February 2013). The lingering effects of all these experiences are to be observed in the narratives of the respondents. A friend of Ibrahim in Ayvalık, Osman, told that "whenever *we* see a car of the gendarme or the police, *we* still assume they would come and take us to the police station" (italics for emphasis, interview, 26 February 2013). Wimmer's argument is that "informal, everyday discrimination" (2013:75) providing one of the ways through which ethnic boundaries are made could be illustrated through the use of pronouns such as 'we' and 'our'.

For the respondents living in Southeast Turkey, ethnic origin is a marker not so much in the interactions amongst 'ordinary people' but in their interactions with the state and with the state institutions. The following narratives illustrate this.

Ali, born and grew up in Derik, who did his undergraduate in Ağrı,[145] told his experience of discrimination he encountered by the university officials there:

> One day, I was sitting in the university café with my friends and I was playing my guitar and singing this Kurdish folk song when suddenly the security officials came and told me that I cannot play my guitar. This is discrimination (interview, 28 April 2013).

Elif from Derik told me that her brother did his military service in Van[146] and he received "special attention" just because he was a Kurd (interview, 10 May 2013). Reyhan's brother mentioned earlier also did his military service in the Eastern Anatolian region. In one of the informal conversations I had with a respondent who identifies herself as Turk in Ayvalık, she told me that most of the time, the state intentionally sends people of Kurdish origins to the Eastern or Southeast Anatolian

[145] Ağrı is a province in Eastern Anatolia. Though the official numbers are unknown due to the invisibility of ethnic data in Turkish censuses, it is an area where Kurds predominate. In fact, the current mayor after the local elections on March 30th in 2014 is Sırrı Sakık, an MP for BDP and the banner of the official website for the municipality of Ağrı (www.agri.bel.tr) is in both Turkish and in Kurdish.

[146] Van is a province in Eastern Anatolian region and is considered part of Kurdistan homeland.

regions for the military service because the state wants to make them feel worse about themselves[147] (field notes, 19 June 2014).

All in all, this section discussed encounters of prejudice and discrimination as one of the means of boundary making of 'Kurdishness' in Turkey. This is possible in both parts of Turkey due to the fact that these encounters of prejudice and discrimination are observed in both parts. The influence of regions in these encounters; however, is observed in the contextual nature of these encounters. Language and the accent act as boundary markers for the respondents from Southeast Turkey. For native speakers of Kurdish, when they speak Kurdish in public places and when they speak Turkish due to their accent, it is possible to encounter acts of prejudice and discrimination. Language and the accent are less likely to act as boundary markers for the respondents from Western Turkey as they are more likely to be native speakers of Turkish. For these respondents, names (as is the case with Emir's daughter in her school) or ethnic origins could act as boundary markers. Through these encounters of prejudice and discrimination, boundaries are being (re-)shaped to distinguish between the groups of 'we' and 'they', which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. The further implications of these findings will be discussed in the next section.

5.5. Discussion

The data presented so far can be summarised and interpreted as the following.

First of all, this chapter showed other forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested amongst the respondents. The previous chapter showed that through the changes in state rhetorics, 'Kurdishness' could be manifested in modified forms compared to the previous periods with a different state rhetoric. This chapter showed variances in forms of 'Kurdishness' in different ways through interactions with 'ordinary people': there are instances where 'Kurdishness' is manifested through attachment to cultural elements; through attachment to only language even though other aspects of Kurdish culture

[147] By stating this, this respondent also implied that people who serve their military service in Kurdish homelands witness events that would traumatise them.

are not as important (the cases of Mahsun and Halil); through "self-identification" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) or identification by others as in the case of 'half-Kurd'. It is possible to observe a straightforward relationship between the regions individuals are based in and the extent to which they express some form of cultural attachment. That is, all the respondents from Southeast Turkey showed a strong attachment, whereas for the respondents in Western Turkey, it was more complicated.

Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2014) argue that, based on their data from a major public survey, the region has a significant impact on ethno-nationalist orientations of Kurds. That is, Kurds from southeast Turkey, according to Sarigil and Fazlioglu, are more likely to have an ethno-nationalist orientation compared to Kurds living in other regions (2014: 446). One of their other findings is that Kurds who think they face discrimination in any aspect of their lives are more likely to develop a stronger ethno-nationalist orientation. The question of whether regional differences play a significant role when constructing 'Kurdishness' is one of the questions that this research is interested in and the differences across regions are acknowledged in this chapter. Rezine, for instance, said that she was raised in a Kurdish culture in Muş (Eastern Anatolia), whereas Emel, who was born and grew up in Sivas (Central Anatolia), said that she does not feel any attachment towards Kurdish culture.[148] This difference could be explained by the contextual differences between those regions. It is not sufficient; however, to explain how Emel (and Arif, for instance, who has been living in Ayvalık since he was 2 years old) still identifies herself as Kurd. To understand this, the boundary-making approach is useful: by using the encounters of prejudice and discrimination as one of the means of ethnic boundary making, individuals (re-)shape the boundaries of 'Kurdishness'.

The discussion throughout this chapter then suggests a slightly modified version of Sarigil and Fazlioglu's findings (2014). Instead of stating that individuals are more ethno-nationalistic or less ethno-nationalistic depending on the regions they are based

[148] The fact that Emel experiences detachment from Kurdish culture is through a combination of different factors, of which region is one. Another one, which is the fact that she is not a native speaker of Kurdish, will be discussed in the next point.

in, this research suggests that individuals manifest their own forms of 'Kurdishness' in different ways, depending on the contextual differences. This means that 'Kurdishness' is not a matter of degree; rather it is simply manifested in different forms in different contexts. Similar to Wimmer's argument of boundaries as varying from one social situation and from one context to another (2008: 976), 'Kurdishness' responds to different contexts by modifying its forms.

Secondly, two of the questions that this research is interested in, language and region, are related in the sense that regions are influential on individuals' usage of Kurdish language. The influence of regional differences could be observed in its relationship with language. I started this chapter with some observations of mine, as a researcher who was born and grew up in Western part of Turkey, about going to Southeast Turkey for the first time. As mentioned above, language and the accent act as boundary markers for the respondents from Southeast Turkey. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, other factors are also influential in an individual's relationship with the Kurdish language, yet the role regions play in how 'Kurdishness' is manifested could be observed through its relationship with language.

Emel's case suggests that individuals who are not fluent in the Kurdish language do not exhibit significant levels of attachment towards cultural elements of 'Kurdishness'. This provides a partial explanation for the Turkish state's persistence on policies aimed at suppressing the Kurdish language, on not establishing a separate education system in the Kurdish language and on restricting the use of the Kurdish language in public space even after the recent developments discussed in the previous chapter. So, what the Turkish state has tried to do is to make Kurds feel alienated from their own culture by taking away one of the crucial parts of Kurdish culture, the language. Where an individual, for whatever reasons,[149] is not fluent in Kurdish language, there could be dissociation from cultural attachment to a certain extent. Or, in other words, feeling alienated from Kurdish culture is easier for individuals who are not fluent in Kurdish language. Related to the overarching

[149] Some of the reasons for which the respondents are not able to be fluent in the Kurdish language will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

argument of this research; however, the respondents who do not exhibit attachment towards cultural elements manifest their own forms of 'Kurdishness' in other ways such as through self-identification, and through demands for education in mother tongue and for the right to self-determination (Chapter 4).

Even the respondents who do not associate themselves with the Kurdish culture or do not differentiate Kurdish culture from the Turkish one could identify themselves as Kurds. The cases of Emel and Reyhan, who are not fluent in Kurdish language, also suggest that language is not *sine qua non* for the establishment of forms of 'Kurdishness'. The identification of one's self as a 'Kurd', "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) is something that develops independent from the language. That is why it is possible for an individual, who was born and grew up in parts other than Kurdistan homeland without any particular knowledge in Kurdish, to also develop forms of 'Kurdishness'. Emel was visibly distraught when her friends called her 'half-Kurd' because of her lack of fluency in Kurdish language. Reyhan, despite her not being a native speaker of Kurdish, still identifies herself as Kurd. As argued earlier, it is not that individuals from Western part of Turkey show less ethno-nationalist orientations; it is rather that they manifest their own forms of 'Kurdishness' in different ways and this is made possible through means of boundary making. In this case, those means, as illustrated earlier, is the encounters of prejudice and discrimination individuals receive.

The only respondent who is strictly opposed to being identified as Kurd was Arzu, who is a descendant of the victims of Dersim uprising. She grew up in a family where it was "too painful to talk about those incidents from the past" (group interview, 19 June 2014). The intense pain of remembering the events of Dersim led her family not to even mention it. This created a different environment for Arzu. She is now married to a Kurd and has started learning Kurdish, and these all have an influence on her constructing a form of 'Kurdishness' through these interactions. Her case, however, will be focused more on Chapter 6, where the influence of family environment and of neighbourhood will be discussed. "Ascription" (Barth 1969) is more crucial than any other objective criterion such as language. What is more is that

it is "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) not imposed by anybody else but the respondents themselves. As exemplified in the incident of 'half-Kurds', it is not the criteria that the others (in this example, the others being the fellow Kurds) ascribe to people, but how people perceive themselves to be that is influential in one's sense of identification. In this sense, 'Kurdishness' in this research is taken in Brubaker's terms as it treats 'Kurdishness' as "variable and contingent rather than fixed and given" (2002: 168).

Prejudices and discriminatory behaviours together combined constitute one of the means through which boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped. Related to Wimmer's argument of "everyday discrimination" being one of the means of boundary making (2013: 75), the data in this chapter showed that everyday experiences of prejudices and discrimination provide means through which 'us' and 'they' are determined. Halil, for instance, told me that he became politicized and interested in Leftist ideas from a very young age. When he went to the Public Library one day to search for İsmail Beşikçi[150] and his works, he could not find any. Then, he decided to look for works on Kurds in general and he discovered the books that were about the denial of Kurds. Halil expressed that moment by saying that he was very frustrated (interview, 4 March 2013). As was shown in the relevant section, the reasons for prejudices and discriminatory behaviours vary. Acts of prejudice and discrimination are encountered due to different reasons: the language and the accent, names, and ethnic origins. As was illustrated earlier, these different factors act as boundary markers for individuals depending on which part of Turkey individuals are based in. This way, individuals across towns and regions all contribute to making the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' through constructing their own forms of 'Kurdishness'. Encounters of prejudice and discrimination is one of the means through which boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped. Other means through which this is made possible will be discussed in Chapter 6.

[150] Ismail Beşikçi is a Turkish sociologist who has written extensively about Kurds in Turkey. He served many years in prison and many of his books were banned in Turkey due to his criticism of the Turkish state's policies towards its Kurdish citizens.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the question of region and on the roles regions play a significant role on manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. In line with the overarching argument that there are varieties of 'Kurdishness' across different contexts, the data presented in this chapter showed that 'Kurdishness' is manifested in different ways: 'Kurdishness' could be manifested through an attachment to Kurdish culture, through an attachment to only the Kurdish language or through self-identification. Instead of simply stating that individuals have more ethno-nationalist or less ethno-nationalist orientations depending on where they are based in within Turkey, this chapter suggests that 'Kurdishness' is manifested in different forms in different contexts. Regional differences provide these different contexts. This is observed with regards to attachment to cultural elements; that is, how attached individuals feel to 'Kurdish culture'. Individuals who do not perceive attachment to Kurdish culture; however, manifest their own forms of 'Kurdishness' in different ways such as an attachment to the Kurdish language or identification. When it comes to manifestation of 'Kurdishness' as identification, self-identification, or "self-ascription" (Barth 1969), is the determining factor. Last part of this chapter focused on encounters of discrimination and prejudice as means of boundary making. The role that different regions play is reflected in generating different boundary markers for different regions: for individuals from Southeast Turkey, the language they speak and the accent in which they speak Turkish act as boundary markers, whereas for individuals from Western Turkey, having a Kurdish name and the ethnic origins act as markers. Through these different markers across different regions, individuals from either part of Turkey construct their own forms of 'Kurdishness'. Chapter 6 will focus on how the language shapes different forms of 'Kurdishness' through family environments and neighbourhoods that individuals have.

6. CONTEXTUALISING 'KURDISHNESS' THROUGH LANGUAGE: FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Chapter 5 explored how regions are effective in shaping different forms of 'Kurdishness'. It showed that the role that different regions play is reflected in encounters of discrimination and prejudice. This chapter will focus on the role that the language plays in shaping different forms of 'Kurdishness'. It will show that language is effective in constructing different forms of 'Kurdishness' through different family environments and neighbourhoods that the respondents have. Then, the interaction of all these factors will be discussed. All these variables, along with encounters of prejudice and discrimination discussed in Chapter 5, constitute part of 'everyday practices' of individuals. The second part of this chapter; therefore, will be devoted to how all these variables interact to influence forms of 'Kurdishness'. The last part of this chapter will discuss, in reference to boundary theories discussed in Chapter 1, how boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped by individuals through the language they use and through their narratives. By focusing on the roles that family environments and on neighbourhoods play in shaping different forms of 'Kurdishness', this chapter focuses on more micro contexts compared to the ones in Chapters 4 (state rhetoric) and 5 (regions).

6.1. The Role of Language through Everyday Practices

6.1.1. The Role of Language through Family Environments

Since the age of the respondents varied from teenager years to late-fifties, the influence of family environments can be looked at in two different ways: the family which the respondents were born into (their parents and/or primary caregivers) and the family they acquired later on in their lives (their spouses and children).

In terms of the family that one is born into, there was consistency across the respondents: there was only one respondent (Rezine) who had a mother of Turkish ethnic origin but apart from that, all the respondents were born to ethnically Kurdish

parents. Family environment is one of the factors that create social interactions and social experiences for a person. In fact, for many people, it is where most of the first social encounters were shaped. Chapter 5 showed that language could play a role for an individual encountering prejudice and discrimination, which provides one of the means through which boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped. These encounters could emerge both amongst native speakers of Kurdish and non-native speakers. That is, it is possible that an individual could encounter prejudice and discrimination coming from native- or non-native speakers, depending on the language and/or the accent in which he speaks the language. For instance, a native speaker of Kurdish could face discrimination and prejudice due to speaking Kurdish in public space or due to the accent he speaks Turkish in.[151] The aim of this section is to illustrate another way through which the language shapes different forms of 'Kurdishness': family environments. By discussing that, it aims to show how family environments generate different contexts of 'Kurdishness', which, in turn, are effective in construction of different forms of 'Kurdishness' by the respondents.

As the process of acquiring and learning a language mostly starts within family environments, language that is spoken by parents and within the family becomes important for the respondents. The effect of language acquisition can be observed in the respondents' experiences of their early school years. Most of the respondents, when talking about their time when they first started primary school, had bad memories. Hasan, who is from a small village in the centre of Mardin, narrated the stories of him and of his brothers/relatives/friends when they all started the primary school in Mardin. He grew up at a time when there was no electricity nor TV in his village, so he was not exposed to any Turkish before he started school. He described what he and his friends went through as little kids as 'traumatic' [*travmatik*]:

> It was the Monday morning and we would do the usual: we would sing National Anthem; we would recite *Andımız*; we would go inside. The school principal would read aloud our names; we would go to his room and he would take out his iron bar and start beating us…That is how it all started. From that point on, if we would speak Kurdish in any way, even amongst each other, we would get beaten. There would even be spies outside the school and they would inform the principal and/or the teachers when any of us speaks Kurdish outside

[151] These points were illustrated through the narratives of the respondents in Chapter 5.

> the school. Then, we would go to school on Monday and get beaten again (interview, 17 April 2013).

İlhan, who grew up in a village near Diyarbakır, had the similar experience when he started the primary school without knowing any Turkish. He said, "*We* had so many difficulties; *we* had no clue what was going on; *we* did not want to go to school; the teachers would beat *us* with iron bars for *us* not to speak any Kurdish" (italics for emphasis, interview, 22 April 2013). Halil, whose family moved to Mersin when he was around 5-6 years old, was luckier in this regard. Similar to the respondents mentioned above, he did not know any Turkish before their move to Mersin from Adıyaman. In his village in Adıyaman, in his words, "his whole life was in Kurdish" (interview, 4 March 2013) and he first encountered Turkish when they moved to Mersin. Yet, he had one year before he started the primary school, so by the time he started the school, he knew Turkish a bit and he did not receive the same treatment by his teachers as the ones who did not know Turkish did. However, he added that he still heard stories from his friends who were beaten up by their teachers and who were spied on when they spoke Kurdish. Ali, who was born and grew up in Derik, was also one of the luckier ones in the sense that he knew a bit of Turkish when he started the school because his father could speak a bit of Turkish. This, he said, led him not to have as traumatic experiences as his other friends who did not know Turkish (interview, 28 April 2013). Arif, whose parents moved to Ayvalık from Mardin when he was two years old, had also some difficulties on the 1st grade. In his words, initially, he "felt excluded" from the social circle but in time, "things changed for him when *they* got to know him more" (interview, 5 June 2014). His friend, Burak, again had similar experiences in his first years of school (interview, 5 June 2014). Emel, who is one of the respondents who was referred to as 'half-Kurd' as illustrated in Chapter 5, had a different experience. Her parents were native speakers of Kurdish and they always talked in Kurdish to her and to all her other siblings. In fact, her mother did not even know one word of Turkish, so the fact that Emel now is not fluent in Kurdish language makes it a more interesting case. She always questioned herself why she would not be as fluent in Kurdish as some others who also had Kurdish-speaking parents. This is her explanation for this in her own words:

> [As a kid] I would go outside and everybody was Turk, so I would speak Turkish probably to be included in them. In order not to be excluded, not to be

> frowned upon, we even rejected our own language. We thought, "the more we speak Turkish, the more we would be included in the system" (field notes, 5 June 2014).

So, for Emel, the Turkish language had a functional purpose. She thought that if she spoke only Kurdish, she would not have a chance to interact with the people she saw outside in Sivas, an environment where is not predominated by Kurds. After moving away from her hometown, Emel married a Turk (now divorced), had two children who do not speak any Kurdish, and lived in Adapazarı and Istanbul for 22 years. Eight years ago, she worked in Derik for one year. Even though she currently spends her time between Ayvalık and Istanbul, she goes to Derik every year to stay there for some time to visit her "second family", as she calls them. She is a very active member of HDP in its Ayvalık branch, so she spends a good deal of her time everyday being actively involved in pro-Kurdish movement. In her own words, she "has always been involved with the Kurdish Freedom Movement but she had always done that with her Turkish friends. Not only politically but also in non-political relationships, she has always been around Turks" (interview, 5 June 2014). As was discussed in Chapter 5, Emel does not feel that she belongs to 'Kurdish culture'. The form of 'Kurdishness' she constructs, however, is manifested in the way she identifies herself ("as a Kurd", she says) and in the way she feels distraught when others call her a 'half-Kurd' when she has troubles in speaking Kurdish.

During my stay in Derik, there was another case similar to the situation of Emel that is worth discussing: Ramazan, whom I frequently interacted both formally and informally and whose house I visited many times during my stay there, works in construction sites. He is married to someone who is also of Kurdish descent and has one daughter and one son. Whenever I visited their house, he and his wife would speak to each other in Turkish most of the time so that I could understand their conversation (they would normally speak to each other in Kurdish) but he would speak Kurdish to his son, who was two years old at the time, and to his daughter, who was 8 years old, in Kurdish. His son, who had just started uttering some words, would respond in Kurdish but in all of my visits to their house, I never witnessed the daughter (who will be referred to as 'Burcu' from now on) speaking Kurdish. When I asked Ramazan and his wife if this was because of my presence, they simply said no. They said that she had been speaking in Turkish most of the time since they moved

back from Aydın (field notes, 1 May 2013).[152] They had lived there for five years prior and in fact, their son was born there before they moved back to Derik. Burcu had contacts in Aydın whom, in time, she became very attached to. In fact, I was told by Burcu's parents that as soon as I met her, she liked me a lot because I "reminded her of her close friend in Aydın" (field notes, 26 April 2013). Burcu's case, again, is an example of the functionality of the Turkish language; she used it to interact with the people around her in Aydın.

All these cases illustrate the functionality of the Turkish language for the respondents. In Chapter 2, the instrumentalist camp within the discussion on linguistic nationalism was mentioned. Those scholars (Anderson 1983; Billig 1995; Deutsch 1953; Gellner 1983) argued that language, instead of being the essential element of an individual's culture, could be used as an instrument by individuals. In this sense, it could be suggested that the Turkish language serves the role of "functional communication" (Hearn 2006: 210) for most of the respondents. However, there were also incidents where, such as Emel's case, the respondent thought speaking Turkish would serve as "a medium of status-marking" (Hearn 2006: 213). Ebru, who was born and grew up in Derik and is a native speaker of Kurdish, exemplified this when she mentioned her cousins who are not fluent in Kurdish. When I asked her why her cousins, who were also raised in Derik, did not speak Kurdish, she answered that speaking Turkish, for them, was "a sign of modernity" (interview, 5 May 2013).

This could be observed in the case of Mahsun when he grew up. Mahsun, who was born, grew up and lived in Hakkari until he was eighteen years old, had a family environment where Kurdish was spoken all the time. He witnessed the pressures and the bans on Kurdish language and that, in his words, "created a trauma for him". He felt "ashamed of his native language" during his youth (interview, 20 February 2013). The Turkish language was considered by him as a marker of having a higher status within the society. Currently, Kurdish is the language that is spoken in his home in Istanbul. It is the language of "his family and that is not going to change" (interview, 20 February 2013). What happened with his children (a 6-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son) is that Kurdish is their mother language since it is the

[152] Aydın is a province in the Aegean region of Western Turkey.

language they speak at home to their parents but they are also aware that a different language is spoken when they are in public space. This was a conscious decision by Mahsun and his wife to raise their children as native speakers of Kurdish, leaving Turkish to be learnt when they start kindergarten. The feelings of shame and the experience of trauma explain why Mahsun, along with his wife, insist on a family environment for his children where they could grow up without facing any pressure but also having a healthy attitude towards their own language. This is crucial for Mahsun as is evidenced by this excerpt:

> The best thing about what we are doing at home is that my daughter and my son do not feel any shame towards their own language, as I used to. They do not feel any pressure and therefore, they will not go through the same traumatic periods as I did (interview, 20 February 2013).

However, there is another reason why Mahsun wants their children to learn Kurdish at home and learn Turkish 'outside'. His reasoning was that if his daughter and his son learn Turkish from them, then they would learn Turkish with a Kurdish accent. So, he and his wife deliberately avoided speaking Turkish to them so that they would learn Turkish at school from their teachers who are native speakers of Turkish. If they learn Turkish from their teachers, Mahsun said, then "they would speak it more correctly and without an accent" (interview, 20 February 2013). In Chapter 5, it was discussed that speaking Turkish with an accent that would let others know that you are a native speaker of Kurdish could result in experiencing discrimination and prejudice. Minimising the existence of a Kurdish accent in Turkish; therefore, is important for non-native speakers of Turkish. This mentality of Mahsun; however, differs than most of the other respondents, the reason for which will be discussed in the following section when discussing how the language plays its role in shaping forms of 'Kurdishness' through neighbourhoods.

Ibrahim and his wife, on the other hand, have a different interaction with their children. Ibrahim speaks in a regretful way when discussing the situation of Kurdish language in his home. He said all of his three children (a 13-year-old daughter, a 12-year-old son and a 10-year-old son all of whom were born and grew up in Ayvalık) speak Turkish all the time when they are home. "Nobody at home, except me and my wife, speaks Kurdish" (interview, 26 February 2013). It is crucial; however, to point

out that he insists on speaking Kurdish to all of his children. In fact, he speaks only Kurdish to his youngest son so that he would learn Kurdish but his children speak Turkish because of "their mother's influence". He also takes an active role in the process of his children's Kurdish learning by sending them to his hometown, Muş, in summertime for them to be able to speak Kurdish more fluently. He continued:

> We had this discussion many times with my wife and I always tell her to speak Kurdish with our children but she says, 'no, they would anyway learn Kurdish, I do not want them to have problems outside'; so she always talks to them in Turkish (interview, 26 February 2013).

In this case, then, the wife's fear that her children might encounter problems if they are not fluent in Turkish is an example for the relationship between the language and the family environment.

Emir, a teacher living in Ayvalık, has a slightly different situation in the sense that his wife is Turkish. That makes it more difficult for him to speak Kurdish at home: His children (one daughter and one son, both going to high school in Ayvalık) are able to comprehend Kurdish a bit but they are not able to speak it. Since his wife does not know any Kurdish, it is difficult for the children to learn Kurdish. He believes in the importance of the surrounding stimuli on learning a language, as Ibrahim does, and that is why he said his children did have the opportunity to learn Kurdish when they used to live in Viranşehir[153] when they were younger. However, both of the children suffered from asthma, so they could not be outside for long to play with Kurdish-speaking children on the streets, hence they were not able to learn Kurdish. Contrary to this, the case of Rezine was different. Even though her mother was of Turkish ethnic origin, what happened in her case was that her father and his family have dominated the family environment. This excerpt might illuminate this:

> Sometimes, we would sit at home with all the family and my [paternal] uncles would tell a funny story. We would all laugh but my mum would say, "tell it in Turkish so I could understand it as well". We would translate it to Turkish but then, all the humour in the story would be lost (group interview, 19 June 2014).

Out of 33 respondents, only one respondent grew up in a family where Turkish was dominantly spoken even though both parents were of Kurdish ethnic origin and that was the case of Arzu. In the case of Arzu, it was mentioned in Chapter 5 that her

[153] Viranşehir is a town predominated by Kurds in the province of Şanlıurfa in Southeast Turkey.

grandparents were the victims of Dersim uprisings, after which they were exiled in other parts of Turkey. Both her maternal and paternal grandparents were from the same tribe in Dersim, yet they found each other again in Konya,[154] where they first came after they were exiled from Dersim. After they got married in Konya, they moved to Izmir, where Arzu was also born and grew up. Her family environment was so much influenced by the Kemalist doctrine that Arzu explains that her family, as much as most of the Dersim exiles, supports CHP and are loyal to Kemalist principles of the state. She states: "During those times [the massacre and the displacement of people], Turkish was forced upon people and they became all Kemalists and supporters of CHP" (group interview, 19 June 2014). As a result, Turkish was spoken in her family and she grew up as a native speaker of Turkish. When I talked to her, she had started learning Kurdish by reading books. She "does not feel Kurdish" (group interview, 19 June 2014), which suggests the role of her family environment when she was growing up.

Speaking Kurdish and teaching Kurdish to their children (as in the cases of Emir, Ibrahim, and Mahsun) is seen crucial by the respondents to create a family environment that is conducive to develop some forms of 'Kurdishness'. This suggests the awareness they have of the importance that the family environment has for constructing forms of 'Kurdishness'.

This section aimed to show the role that the language plays in different forms of 'Kurdishness' through family environments. For the respondents who are based in Western part of Turkey, the family provides the only environment where Kurdish language could be learnt. However, where the Kurdish language is not learnt within the family such as the cases of Arzu and Emel, it is still possible to manifest different forms of 'Kurdishness' in the later stages of their lives. For Emel, it was exhibited in the form of being involved within the Kurdish Movement and of making explicit demands about the right to have education in mother tongue (discussed in Chapter 4). As was discussed in Chapter 5, she also defines herself as a Kurd. Arzu does not define herself as a Kurd. As will be discussed in the following section; however, Arzu also spends a considerable amount of her time with Reyhan and Rezine, who are self-ascribed Kurds. This, as part of her 'neighbourhood', might contribute

[154] Konya is a big city in Central Anatolia, which is not considered part of the homeland for Kurds.

significantly to forming her own forms of 'Kurdishness'. The effects of neighbourhood and in which ways one's neighbourhood plays a role in manifesting different forms of 'Kurdishness' will be discussed in the next section.

6.1.2. The Role of Language through Neighbourhoods

In the previous section, the family environment of Mahsun was introduced. There was also the case of Emel, who felt the need to learn Turkish to be included in her external environment even though both her parents do not know any Turkish. It was mentioned that Mahsun and his wife speak only Kurdish to their two children in order for them to learn Turkish at school where they can learn it "without any accent" (interview, 20 February 2013). As mentioned above, however, this attitude is different than the other respondents. Ibrahim mentioned that Kurdish-speaking mothers who live in metropoles put special emphasis on their children learning Turkish in order for them not to feel uncomfortable in the 'outside world' (interview, 26 February 2013). As mentioned in the previous section, Ibrahim's wife herself shows the same attitude. The difference in these attitudes can be explained by the neighbourhoods they live in within the towns they reside. This section will discuss another way through which the language plays its role on constructing different forms of 'Kurdishness': through neighbourhoods.

The neighbourhood where Mahsun lives with his family in Istanbul is an upper-class neighbourhood and the school his children goes to, in Mahsun's own words, is an "upper-class school, so for people there, such things [having Kurdish speakers around] are not a problem" (interview, 20 February 2013). Mahsun lives in a neighbourhood where he feels comfortable speaking Kurdish and declaring himself as Kurd. I conducted my interview with him at a Starbucks in a district of Istanbul, where it was relatively more upper class.[155] I was picked up by his personal assistant in a car to come to the interview place since it is a rather less central neighbourhood of Istanbul and less convenient to travel via public transport. He said that he chose

[155] The name of this neighbourhood is not specified due to anonymity reasons as it is the area where this respondent lives in.

the place because his home was just around the corner (field notes, 20 February 2013). However, he still perceives some disturbance when he is outside [of his neighbourhood] with his daughter or with his son. Since he talks to his children in Kurdish, he fears that people would react if his daughter expressed herself in Kurdish in public (interview, 20 February 2013). At one point during the interview, however, Mahsun's mobile phone rang and he started talking on it in Kurdish at a not so low voice. His body language also showed the relative comfort and ease he was feeling while he was talking in Kurdish. The possibility of him feeling really comfortable with that specific place and the people there knowing him personally might have contributed to his at ease behaviours while speaking Kurdish. His concerns regarding his daughter arise when they go to the more central places of the city (interview, 20 February 2013). At the same time; however, he also emphasised that his 6-year-old daughter and his 2-year-old son (who had just started kindergarten) had not encountered any type of discriminatory behaviours so far in the school, be it from other parents or from other children (interview, 20 February 2013). This contrast of experiences Mahsun receives within and outside of his neighbourhood is effective in shaping his form of 'Kurdishness'. The different neighbourhoods provide different contextual environments for individuals during the course of their everyday lives. Related to the discussion in Chapter 5, Mahsun's case suggests that neighbourhoods determine if individuals encounter prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives.

In Mahsun's case, it is also possible to see a relation between the neighbourhood in which he lives with his family and his social status. As mentioned above, that specific neighbourhood implies that its residents belong to a higher social status. The study of Sarigil and Fazlioglu (2014) discusses the effects of socio-economic approach for Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Using the data based on a comprehensive public opinion survey, they argue that the conventional socio-economic approach, which was defined as "individuals with high socio-economic status (i.e. a high level of income and education) would be less likely to have ethno-nationalist orientations" (2014: 440), did not apply to the Kurdish case in Turkey. That is, similar to economically developed regions where there are ethno-national

conflicts such as Quebec and Catalonia, ethno-nationalist orientations amongst Kurds could not be suppressed through measures of economic improvements (2014: 449). Mahsun's case shows that changes within socio-economic status and neighbourhood are reflected in manifestations of 'Kurdishness'.

The effects of the social status were observed within the neighbourhoods the respondents reside and even in the way they appear to others. Halil, a journalist based in Istanbul, said that he has not encountered much prejudice and/or discrimination in Istanbul and he speculated that this could be due to his and his colleagues' 'modern' outlook. He continued: "People [Turks] have these codes in their minds, such as Kurds being illiterate etc. So, when they see a Kurd holding a Kurdish newspaper in his hand, they get a bit surprised" (interview, 4 March 2013). As discussed above in Mahsun's case, social status, directly or indirectly, influences how 'Kurdishness' is manifested. The indirect influence of social status was observed in Mahsun's case through the neighbourhood he lives in. It also has a more direct influence on manifestations of 'Kurdishness' as the below examples illustrate.

Baran, a high-school student who was born and grew up in Derik who is preparing for university exams, said that he is contemplating more and more every day not to go to the university and to join the PKK guerrillas because he is frustrated (interview, 8 May 2013). His friend, Meryem, whom I interviewed separately and who is also preparing for university exams, made a similar point when she stated that "young people [Kurds] today might decide not to go to school if they fail and they might be hesitant of going to school because they are not fluent in Turkish" (interview, 4 May 2013). Belçim, an 11-year-old girl who is from a village nearby Derik and who does not go to school anymore, is an example for this. When I chatted to her in Turkish, her answers to each question I asked was very short and brief. She could comprehend all the conversations around her and all the questions I asked her in Turkish without any difficulty. However, her responses consisted mostly of 'yes' [*evet*], 'no' [*hayır*], 'I do not remember' [*hatırlamıyorum*] and other brief sentences. When asked, by a teacher in the room, to bring some books in Turkish to check her Turkish, she acted reluctant, which suggested that she might be feeling uncomfortable with her level of Turkish (field notes, 28 April 2013).

In Ayvalık, the effects of neighbourhood were also observed. The discussion below aims to introduce a specific neighbourhood within Ayvalık, where three of the respondents (Arif, Burak, and Ibrahim) resided.

Yenimahalle, as is known by the locals, is the neighbourhood of Ayvalık where the Kurdish immigrants from Eastern and Southeast Anatolia are mostly settled in (field notes, 25 February 2013). This is where *Newroz* and other events that HDP wants to celebrate usually take place in Ayvalık.[156] In Chapter 5, a narrative by Emel was given on how the delegates of HDP faced difficulties when they wanted to celebrate International Women's Day together with all the other parties but at the end, they had to celebrate separately in *Yenimahalle*. During the campaign for the municipality elections on 30 March 2014, all the demonstrations were also held in *Yenimahalle* (field notes, 5 June 2014). For International Workers' Day in 2014, however, even *Yenimahalle* was not available. Hakan, another delegate for HDP, explains how they, as the whole HDP group, had to move away from Ayvalık to Burhaniye, the neighbouring town that attracts less visitors, to celebrate International Workers' Day without having to give way to the demands of CHP. The group representing CHP, Hakan continued, wanted to start the celebrations with the National Anthem and asked for shouting slogans that were only in Turkish (field notes, 5 June 2014). The district of *Yenimahalle* presents an interesting case: even though it is known as the 'neighbourhood of Kurds' amongst the locals, it is also possible to observe "banal" (Billig 1995) instances of Turkish nationalism as the pictures below illustrate:

[156] In fact, Emel explains that the *Newroz* celebrations in 2014 in *Yenimahalle* were the first time that *Newroz* was celebrated in Ayvalık (field notes, 5 June 2014).

Pictures 6.1., 6.2. and 6.3. Turkish flags on the buildings of private apartments in *Yenimahalle* (photos taken by the author, 09 July 2015).

The existence of Turkish flags at the particular time of taking the pictures is interesting, not least because it was not a national holiday and none of the other neighbourhoods in Ayvalık had this pattern on that specific day. What might have caused such a display of "banal nationalism" (Billig 1995) in this Kurdish neighbourhood? In the beginning of this section, it was mentioned what Ibrahim said about Kurdish-speaking mothers' insistence on talking to their children in Turkish. After this statement, Ibrahim continued that "this is probably what the phrase of 'the pressure of the neighbourhood' [*mahalle baskısı*] is about" (interview, 26 February 2013). The concept of *mahalle baskısı* is a recent term within the Turkish sociological literature, firstly coined by Şerif Mardin in 2007.[157] Mardin discusses the intolerance of the 'small societies' of Turkey towards any value that is against their norms (1991: 186). He discusses that the 'good' and 'bad' values are determined according to the neighbourhood patterns. For example, being religious would be a 'good' thing as the traditional small societies in Turkey are religious, yet 'being

[157] Çetin (2010), in his brief discussion on the concept of *mahalle baskısı*, states that even though the concept was first coined by Mardin in one of his interviews with the journalist Ruşen Çakır in 2007, it has been a historical phenomenon within the Turkish society.

alienated from the neighbourhood' would be considered 'bad' (Mardin 2007: 102). In this case, *mahalle baskısı* results from the fact that the people who do not hang Turkish flags on their apartments might be considered 'outsiders' to the society and this, in turn, might result in alienation of those families who do not hang flags from their neighbourhoods. A different form of the concept of 'the pressure of the neighbourhood' could be observed in a different context within Ayvalık. Hakan, a delegate for HDP, illustrated this point when he discussed the disappointment within the party about its votes in certain neighbourhoods of Ayvalık. This is how he explains it in his own words:

> Some of our Kurdish friends here who migrated from Southeast Anatolia started out construction businesses. They all worked or voted for the 'establishment party' [*düzen partisi*].[158] The reason for that is that they were scared that they would lose money if they do not give their support to it [that party]…That was the main reason why we [HDP] received less votes in the neighbourhoods where we expected more (field notes, 5 June 2014).

This quote is an illustration of how neighbourhood interacts with other factors such as social status.

The role of the language in this process is summarised in what Burak, who lives in *Yenimahalle*, narrated: when I asked him if he would consider himself fluent in Kurdish language, he said 'no' and he added that even when he is with his Kurdish friends, they speak to each other in Turkish (interview, 5 June 2014). As was the case in the previous section, Turkish here again is seen as the medium of "functional communication" (Hearn 2006: 210) for Burak and his friends. Speaking Turkish merely serves the purpose of communicating amongst themselves and in their neighbourhood and it does not prevent individuals from exhibiting forms of 'Kurdishness', as the cases of Emel and Burak suggest.[159]

Similar to the arguments discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, instead of stating that people are less or more likely to have ethno-nationalistic orientations depending on their

[158] By 'establishment party', what the respondent refers to here is the 'mainstream parties', the main purpose of which is to protect status quo. AKP, for him, was considered in this category.
[159] It needs to be emphasised here that Burcu was not one of the respondents who was interviewed. I had the chance to interact with her through her father Ramazan, who was one of my respondents, so the data about her that is presented here are field notes during the occasional visits to their house. As I did not observe her regularly outside her family environment, saying something about how she manifests her 'Kurdishness' would be a mere speculation.

socio-economic status, the discussion in this chapter suggests that the form of 'Kurdishness' that individuals exhibit changes its forms. The role that the language plays was shown to be effective through family environments and neighbourhoods. Social status was also shown to be effective through its interaction with neighbourhood. In towns where they are not predominated by Kurds such as Ayvalık and Istanbul, the existence of neighbourhoods provides individuals experiences to construct their own forms of 'Kurdishness'.

Combined with the family environment that was discussed in the previous section, the neighbourhood and social status constitute the other contextual variables for manifesting different forms of 'Kurdishness'. This way, the discussion in this chapter so far presents the continuation of the discussions in Chapters 4 and 5, where other contextual variables playing a significant role in manifestations of 'Kurdishness' were discussed. The variables that were discussed in this chapter are in interaction with individuals in their everyday lives. Chapter 5 discussed another contextual variable as part of the respondents' everyday lives: encounters of discrimination and prejudice. That discussion also suggested that different regions are generators of different contexts for individuals. The following discussion, then, explores how all these variables, constituting part of everyday practices, interact with each other to generate different contexts for different forms of 'Kurdishness'.

6.2. How Everyday Practices Work in Interaction

The relationship within everyday practices (encounters of discrimination and prejudice, family environment, and neighbourhood/social status) works in different ways. One way through which all these factors interact with each other is that discrimination and prejudice an individual encounters in his or her neighbourhood might result in changing of neighbourhood. This was what happened with Abdurrahman in his private sector experience in Istanbul:

> There were disadvantages of being a Kurd in the private sector. You should not say, 'I am a Kurd'; you should not speak Kurdish…Let's not fool ourselves: nobody goes higher up the hierarchy by saying that 'I am a Kurd' or by speaking Kurdish publicly…It was not the only reason why I quit my job in

> Istanbul and moved back here [Derik] but 40%, it was because of that; I was not feeling comfortable (interview, 10 May 2013).

Before moving to Istanbul, he did his undergraduate studies in Ankara. He talked about his experiences there by stating that it was difficult for him to establish relationships because he was made fun of because of his accent. In his words, "Kurds are always 1-0 behind" (interview, 10 May 2013). Those negative experiences, in part, led him to move back to his hometown.

The relationship between encounters of discrimination and of prejudice and neighbourhood/social status also works in other directions in the sense that one perceives less prejudiced attitudes and less discriminatory behaviours because his socialisation process involves other fellow Kurds. This is what happened with Arif regarding his experiences in Ayvalık. As was quoted in Chapter 5, Arif stated that he feels more or less comfortable there since he could speak Kurdish and could express freely that he is Kurdish. He explained the change in this attitude through the success of the Kurdish Movement and stated that "*we* have paid the price for this to happen" (italics for emphasis, interview, 5 June 2014). However, it should be noted that he works as a construction worker in an environment where it is dominated by Kurds and this might be the reason for his different perception of prejudices and discriminatory behaviours. After my formal interview with Arif at the Ayvalık branch of HDP, he left and I stayed to have some informal chat with the other members there. Having overheard what Arif stated about living comfortably as a Kurd in Ayvalık, Emel had this to say:

> It would be expected for him to say something like that because he works in an environment where everyone is Kurd…[160] It would be wrong to assume that Kurds have a comfortable life here. Some progress has been made, albeit very slowly, but things are still not ok. I have seen incidents of people getting jobs in some places just for the next day to be fired because they are Kurds (field notes, 5 June 2014).

The similar thing could be said about Halil. Working as a language activist in Istanbul and as a journalist in a newspaper in Kurdish language, his work environment is surrounded by Kurds. He said that they all speak Kurdish at work and they also speak Kurdish when they all go out together (interview, 4 March 2013). If a

[160] She pointed out that most Kurds who migrated from Southeast Turkey work in the construction sector, so there is some kind of a 'niche' there (field notes, 5 June 2014).

Kurd works in an environment where it is dominated by non-Kurds, it might happen that the experiences he encounters in that environment result in him being motivated to be in an environment where it is dominated by his fellow Kurds, as was exemplified by Abdurrahman's narrative above. This would result in different experiences of socialisation processes for individuals. It also illustrates how boundary theory works to (re-)shape the boundaries of 'Kurdishness'. Ebru, born and grew up in Derik, had this reaction when I asked her whether she would want to work and live in Western part of Turkey:

> No. Of course, a work is a work but I want to work in the East [Eastern Turkey]. Maybe this is a nationalist sentiment but I want to work for my nation. I would be more comfortable in the East; it is my nation after all. For example, I compare myself to my friend [who studied in Çorum[161]] and I was really comfortable in Hakkari [when I did my undergraduate] compared to her (interview, 5 May 2013).

Is it also the case that the more an individual spends his time amongst non-Kurds (due to his neighbourhood or work environment), the less discrimination and prejudice he would encounter? As was discussed in Chapter 5, discrimination and prejudice, in the case of Kurds in Turkey, are encountered less due to physical features but more from the place of origin, the accent in which one speaks Turkish and due to the fact that an individual speaks Kurdish. If an individual is born and raised in an environment where it is dominated by native speakers of Turkish (due to his family environment or neighbourhood), the chances that he or she would be a native speaker of Turkish or would speak Turkish without any particular accent is higher than an individual who was raised in an environment where it is predominated by native speakers of Kurdish. That might, in turn, result in less discrimination and less prejudice towards that person since the accent, as discussed in Chapter 5, is one of the boundary markers. In a way, what Mahsun has been doing with his children have this motive behind it, as discussed in the previous section. He and his wife want their children to learn Turkish at school, as opposed to learning from them, because they want them to speak Turkish like a native speaker. This point illustrates another way through which the accent in which one speaks Turkish and the language play a role for different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Family environment is crucial in determining an individual's accent and his native language. This, in turn, influences

[161] Çorum is an inland town in Central Anatolia and is not considered part of the Kurdish homeland.

the encounters of prejudice and discrimination, which is in a mutual interaction with neighbourhood and social status, as discussed earlier. In Chapters 4 and 5, some of the different forms of 'Kurdishness' that are manifested by the respondents were discussed: 'Kurdishness' could be manifested through demands of education in mother tongue and self-determination (Chapter 4), through cultural attachment or through identification as Kurd (Chapter 5). The following section discusses how these different forms are shaped by the factors discussed in this chapter.

6.3. The Effect of Everyday Practices on Different Forms of 'Kurdishness'

In Chapter 4, the discussion focused on two different manifestations of 'Kurdishness' (demands of education in mother tongue and self-determination) and these different forms of 'Kurdishness' were explained through the differences and the continuities of AKP rhetoric and Kemalist rhetoric. The different forms of 'Kurdishness' that were shown in Chapter 5, cultural attachment and identification, were explained through encounters of prejudice and discrimination the respondents receive. As the previous section discussed; however, everyday practices do not act in isolation. Rather, all factors that constitute 'everyday practices' are in interaction with each other. This section will discuss how this interaction plays a role in shaping the different forms of 'Kurdishness' mentioned in Chapter 5.

In line with one of the questions that this research is interested in, Chapter 5 discussed language in relation to cultural attachment. That is, it suggested that not being a native speaker of Kurdish language has influence on the extent to which an individual is attached to cultural elements of 'Kurdishness'. This was illustrated through the case of Emel, who is not a native speaker of Kurdish (the reasons for which was discussed in this chapter) and does not perceive herself belonging to a certain 'Kurdish culture'. As discussed in earlier sections, family environment and neighbourhood, separately or combined, play a significant role in which language the individual uses in his or her everyday life. Through this interaction, family environments and neighbourhoods have an impact on an individual's cultural attachment.

The report by *BILGESAM* (Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies), presented in 2011, titled *what are the Kurds and Zazas thinking about?: a look to the shared values and symbols*[162] illustrates how neighbourhoods and regions, through mutual interaction, have an influence on the attitudes of individuals towards cultural elements. It presents the data emerged through the survey done with 8,607 people from 19 provinces of Turkey, 17 of which are from Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions. Two of the remaining provinces are the districts formed by migration in Istanbul and Mersin. With the statement that "Turkish history is our history", only 63.9% of Kurds from the districts of migration in Istanbul and Mersin agreed, making them the group that disagreed with it the most. Throughout the report, Kurds from the eastern and southeastern provinces are divided into two groups, Kurds living in provinces with rare acts of terror and Kurds living in provinces with intensive terror. Both of these groups agreed with that particular statement more than Kurds living in districts formed by migration in Istanbul and Mersin, 71.7% for provinces with intensive terror and 87.7% for provinces with rare acts of terror. This provides an illustration of how neighbourhoods provide contextual situations that generate different forms of 'Kurdishness'.

With regards to manifesting 'Kurdishness' in the form of identification, the interaction between identification and everyday practices is possible in two ways. One example is these words from Burak from Ayvalık narrated:

> People who come from the East [of Turkey] [to the West of Turkey], when they first come here, their primary goal is to earn money, to become rich. What happens when they become rich? They deny their identity. If it works for them, they would say 'I am a Kurd' but it is not about saying that. Others have paid prices for them to say that (interview, 5 June 2014).

This narrative gives an idea how social status plays a role in identification by others. As shown through the case of Mahsun, 'Kurdishness' could be manifested through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) even when the individual belongs to a higher social status. Identification of one's self as a Kurd by others; however, is influenced by social status, as the above narrative suggests. Identification of an individual as a Kurd by others could also be determined by the extent to which someone speaks Kurdish

[162] This report in English can be downloaded at http://www.bilgesam.org/Images/Dokumanlar/0-91-2014031311report26ing.pdf [accessed 15 February 2016].

language. This was suggested in Chapter 5, where the concept of 'half-Kurd' was introduced. In that example, it was native speakers of Kurdish jokingly telling non-native speakers that they were 'half-Kurds'. Emel also mentioned how she was referred to as a 'half-Kurd' by others due to her inability to speak Kurdish fluently. In Emel's case, it is not her social status that makes her 'half-Kurd' in the eyes of others but her inability to speak Kurdish as fluently as them. These two different narratives suggest the importance of both ascription by others and "self-ascription" (Barth 1969). These two processes do not significantly influence each other in the sense that one can identify herself as Kurd even though she is identified as half-Kurd by others (the case of Emel). In Chapter 5, it was also discussed that only one of the respondents (Arzu) did not identify herself as Kurd. It was discussed that coming from a family of the descendants of Dersim incidents of 1937-38, everything that is related to 'Kurdishness' was suppressed within her family. This case suggests the importance of the family environment in whether an individual identifies herself as Kurd or not. Such are different forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested through everyday practices.

6.4. (Re-)shaping the Boundaries of 'Kurdishness'

The discussion so far has showed the effects of everyday practices on 'Kurdishness' and how those factors interact with each other. Throughout this discussion, 'Kurdishness', as a different ethnicity, has been taken for granted. Related to Brubaker and Cooper's argument, it is possible to observe a "high degree of groupness" and "a clear boundary between inside and outside" (2000: 10) when it comes to 'Kurdishness' amongst the respondents. At the same time, related to Wimmer's argument, boundaries "do not imply closure and clarity, which vary from one social situation to another" (2013: 10). However, as the discussion throughout this thesis focuses on different forms of 'Kurdishness' and contextual factors affecting these different forms, 'Kurdishness' as a separate category has been acknowledged. Yet, 'Kurdishness' has been taken as an "event that happens", instead of something that is "fixed and given" (Brubaker 2002: 167-168) with clear boundaries distinguishing members from non-members. The existence of boundaries

manifests itself in the language the respondents use in their narratives. This last section will focus on how these boundaries are (re-)shaped by the respondents.

One way of shaping boundaries is through the respondents' usage of the pronoun 'we' instead of 'I'. By talking in a plural sense, these respondents expressed their feeling of belonging to a certain ethnic group. Abdurrahman, who owns his own business in Derik, illustrates this. He used the plural personal pronoun [*biz*] when he discussed the difficulties he faced as a native-speaker of Kurdish when he was in the primary school:

> The sentence structure of Turkish and Kurdish are very different. Also, it is different to answer a question by thinking it in Kurdish than by thinking it in Turkish. So, *we* face double-struggle. *We* were both trying to learn a foreign language and to learn new knowledge (italics for emphasis, interview, 10 May 2013).

In this case, Abdurrahman puts himself in the same category as his fellow native speakers of Kurdish. The concept of 'half-Kurd' is useful to understand the importance of language for people's perception of others around them. What Abdurrahman does in this narrative, unconsciously or not, is similar to those who use the phrase 'half-Kurd'. By referring to himself and other native speakers of Kurdish as 'we', non-native speakers of Kurdish, in this context, are taken as non-members of 'Kurdishness'. This way, boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are shaped by native speakers of Kurdish by referring to themselves as members of 'Kurdishness', excluding, for this occasion, non-native speakers from belonging to 'Kurdishness'. Similarly, Ibrahim also used the pronoun 'we' when he was discussing the difficulties he faced in Ayvalık and Istanbul before he became fluent in Turkish. He asked rhetorically: "*We* automatically become separatist [*bölücü*] when *we* speak Kurdish, don't *we*?...Whatever *we* do, *we* cannot be all good because of *our* language, because of *our* accent, can *we*?" (italics for emphasis, interview, 26 February 2013). Similar to Abdurrahman, Ibrahim here, by referring to native speakers of Kurdish as 'we', includes those who are native speakers of Kurdish and therefore, who have an accent when speaking Turkish as members of 'Kurdishness', non-native speakers being implied as non-members.

This does not mean; however, that non-native speakers are always perceived as non-members of 'Kurdishness'. The reference to being a native speaker of Kurdish is not there when the topic is not related to speaking Kurdish. Consider the narrative below from Emir from Ayvalık: he had a similar language in his narrative in the sense that he also used the plural personal pronoun instead of a singular pronoun. Compared to Abdurrahman; however, Emir's usage of the plural pronoun is not limited to speakers of Kurdish language:

> The illiteracy rate amongst *us* has always been very low; then *we* realized that this has been a systematic policy of the state. Fevzi Çakmak[163] mentioned this in his memoir by stating that 'do not educate Kurds; if you do, they would be aware of their rights' (italics for emphasis, interview, 28 February 2013).[164]

Another example could be found when Emir talked about the literary tradition of Kurds and said that "*our* literary tradition is not that strong; the system [*sistem*] does not want *our* written literature to flourish because if *our* history is written, it would not get lost" (italics for emphasis, interview, 28 February 2013). Rezine from Ayvalık made a similar statement when she said that "*we* are amazing people despite all that *we* have been through" (italics for emphasis, group interview, 19 June 2014). Ebru responded to my question of what she personally wants at the end of Peace Process by saying that "*we* want *our* language; *we* want *our* identity; *we* want *our* land" (italics for emphasis, interview, 5 May 2013). Ali from Derik explained to me how he thinks Kurds and Turks are not that related in these words: "both linguistically and nationally, *we* are not relatives with Turks; we are neighbours but not relatives" (italic for emphasis, interview, 28 April 2013). Meryem, whose older sister joined the PKK, said that "she went there for *us*; to fight for *us*" (italics for emphasis, interview, 4 May 2013). Arif also expressed his feelings of belonging by stating that "whatever rights *we* have right now, it was not given to *us*; *we* took them through *our* struggle" (italics for emphasis, interview, 5 June 2014).

Compared to previous examples in the beginning of this section, these examples show that, in some other occasions, being a member of 'Kurdishness' is not related to the extent one speaks Kurdish. In some cases, the respondent also draws boundaries

[163] Fevzi Çakmak was a Turkish field marshal and was the first Chief of General of Staff of the Turkish Republic.

[164] Regardless of whether Fevzi Çakmak really said this or not, this narrative is crucial in showing that when this respondent said 'us', he referred to Kurds in general instead of a more specific sub-group.

through the parts of Turkey individuals live in. Elif from Derik, when discussing the effects of the media on shaping the perceptions of people, said that "the media has been working for *them* [people living in the Western part of Turkey] for years; I would be surprised if *they* did not have those types of perceptions" (italics for emphasis, interview, 10 May 2013).[165] This is related to the discussion in Chapter 5, where different regions were discussed as one of the factors that provide contextual differences for individuals. Through being located in different parts of Turkey, individuals are exposed to different effects of the media, which, in turn, have an impact on shaping the boundaries of 'Kurdishness'.

Independent of one's "self-ascription" (Barth 1969), boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped and being a member of this group changes from one occasion to another. By using 'our', 'we', and 'us' in their narratives, the respondents express their attachment to their "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), however that is defined for them. The importance of "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) in shaping the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' could be observed in the cases of Emel and Reyhan, both of whom identify themselves as Kurds despite their lack of fluency in Kurdish language and their residency in Ayvalık. Even though they were considered by others as non-members of 'Kurdishness' due to their lack of proficiency in Kurdish in previous situations, they are members of 'Kurdishness' through their 'self-ascription'.

The other way that respondents shape the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' is more implicit in its manifestation. They did not use 'we', 'us' or 'our' but it is possible to infer from their narratives that they refer to themselves as being members of 'Kurdishness'. Consider, for instance, this narrative by Mahsun:

> She [my daughter] does not know yet what sacrifices have been given for this channel [*TRT 6*] to be established; what stages it has been through, and I do not teach her that yet. I want her to know about that stuff when the time comes. But I do not worry about her being a *Kürtçü*[166] by imposing on her a discourse such as 'we are Kurds, our language was banned etc.'…I do not want to impose my exact ideology on her; I would not want her to copy my opinions (interview, 20 February 2013).

[165] The respondent here refers to the perceptions that view all Kurds as 'terrorists' or 'separatists'.
[166] *Kürtçü* is a Turkish term that is used in informal conversations to refer to people who defend the Kurdish cause.

This narrative is an example for a less explicit way of shaping the boundaries for 'Kurdishness'. It should be mentioned that throughout the interview, Mahsun used a personal language that focused on his individual experiences instead of a more collective language. When he talked about things concerning a more collective level such as the tension between the state and Kurds regarding Kurdish rights, he used the word 'Kurds' instead of using 'we' or 'they', unlike previous examples. However, as the previous chapters showed, it is possible to see his own manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. He shows attachment to Kurdish language; he identifies himself as Kurd; he expresses his demands to self-determination and education in his mother tongue. His case is an example of how 'Kurdishness' exists in different forms. Through more implicit ways, his narrative shapes boundaries of 'Kurdishness'.

Halil provides a more different case. His usage of the pronouns was more mixed: he used both plural [*biz*] and singular [*ben*] pronouns. However, when he used the plural pronoun, it was more to refer to his family or to his colleagues. Consider this quotation as an example:

> [When I was a kid], I did not have much communication with the other kids of the neighbourhood. It was only me, my brother and my cousin, who lived not far away from us. We could not communicate with other kids and we would always fight with them because we would assume they were insulting us (laughter) (interview, 4 March 2013).

Consider the case of Emel, who said this when she elaborated on her lack of fluency in Kurdish language:

> I do not feel that I have a 'lesser identity' just because I do not speak Kurdish. One day, I woke up in the morning and I realised I dreamt in Kurdish; I felt really happy. This does not mean that I do not perceive my identity; it only means that I feel a bit 'loser' [*eziklik*] because I cannot speak my own language (field notes, 05 June 2014).

This narrative suggests that she (re-)shapes the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' to include herself as a member, independent of being perceived as a 'half-Kurd' by others in other situations.

The illustration that individuals switch from being non-members to members and vice versa shows the contextual variability of 'Kurdishness'. It is not only that

boundaries are shaped by individuals; they are also constantly (re-)shaped depending on the situation.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the language plays a role in the manifestation of different forms of 'Kurdishness' through family environments and neighbourhoods. Family environments are important for shaping of different forms of 'Kurdishness' as they influence an individual's fluency in Turkish or in Kurdish, which, in turn, plays a significant role in encountering discrimination and prejudice, through which boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are shaped. The social status is influential on an individual's neighbourhood (as in the case of Mahsun), which, in turn, plays a significant role in shaping forms of 'Kurdishness'. By discussing family environments and neighbourhoods, this chapter concludes the discussion on 'Kurdishness' by focusing on micro-contexts as opposed to the more macro ones in Chapters 3 and 4 (state rhetoric) and in Chapter 5 (region).

These factors, constituting part of 'everyday practices' for individuals, are in interaction with each other, as well as with encounters of prejudice and discrimination discussed in Chapter 5. All these factors, separately or combined, play a significant role in the manifestation of different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Apart from discussing the contextual variables on different forms of 'Kurdishness', the last part of this chapter also discussed how boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are (re-)shaped by individuals. These boundaries manifest themselves in the language the individuals use: through the explicit usage of plural pronouns such as 'we' [*biz*] and 'they' [*onlar*] or implicitly in their narratives, boundaries are determined by individuals. "Self-ascription" (Barth 1969) and ascription by others both play a significant role in shaping the boundaries. The criteria of being a member of 'Kurdishness' include fluency in Kurdish language and being located in Southeast Turkey, yet there are also situations where "self-ascription" draws the boundaries. As the boundaries of 'Kurdishness' are contextually contingent, they are in the process of constant (re-)shaping.

CONCLUSION: (RE-) SHAPING 'KURDISHNESS': FROM MACRO- TO MICRO CONTEXTS

This thesis explored the diversity of 'Kurdishness' and the different ways through which 'Kurdishness' is manifested in Turkey. This research started with three initial questions and the roles they play on manifestation of 'Kurdishness': language, region, and the state rhetoric. Throughout this thesis, I explored how these factors shape the ways through which 'Kurdishness' is manifested. At the end, this thesis argues that there is not one single way of exhibiting 'Kurdishness' in Turkey but multiple, different ways that are shaped through different factors: the state rhetoric, everyday acts of prejudice and discrimination, the family environment and neighbourhood/social status. By doing that, this thesis takes a constructivist approach towards 'Kurdishness' and focuses on elements that are both state-led and individual-centred. This thesis shows that 'Kurdishness' is not about linguistic attachments nor about ethnic origins of an individual; it is about (re-)negotiating state rhetoric and everyday practices individuals experience daily. Through these individual experiences, *customised* and *personalised* forms of 'Kurdishness' are constructed.

Chapter 1 presented the theoretical approaches that were used to frame this research. Divided into two parts, the discussion firstly overviewed theories of nationalism and ethnicity and the second part discussed the literature on boundary making. The first part of the discussion offered an approach towards studying ethnicity that suggests to take into account both state-led factors and interactions amongst 'ordinary people'. The second part of the discussion focused on the means of boundary making. The literature on boundary making is useful to understand how it possible for how boundaries could be stable and continuous even if individuals shift from one category to the other (Wimmer 2013: 205). Chapter 2 discussed the methodology that was used in collecting the data for this research. It gave a detailed account and the justification for the three different methods that was used: semi-structured interviews, document research and participant observation. Chapter 3 presented the first of the two 'moments of transition' in the history of the Turkish state: it focused on the characteristics of the state rhetoric during the early Republican period (1923-1938) and also the characteristics of the forms of 'Kurdishness' that were exhibited during

this period. Chapter 4, following up on this discussion, focused on state rhetoric during AKP period, the second 'moment of transition', and how forms of 'Kurdishness' are manifested under this state rhetoric. Chapters 5 and 6 shifted the focus to interactions amongst 'ordinary people'. Chapter 5 explored the roles different parts of Turkey play in manifesting different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Chapter 6 discussed how the language is effective in (re-)shaping boundaries of 'Kurdishness' through family environments and neighbourhoods.

In this concluding chapter, I first revisit the key findings and the main arguments that were discussed in the substantive chapters. Then, I discuss the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions of this research. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this research and the directions for future research.

Revisiting the Key Findings and Main Arguments

The findings suggest the adoption of a two-dimensional approach towards construction of 'Kurdishness' that takes into account both state-led and bottom-up factors.

- Everyday Practices and 'Kurdishness'

The discussions in Chapters 5 and 6 focused on interactions amongst 'ordinary people'. As one of the questions that this research was interested in was how regions play a role in manifestation of 'Kurdishness', the collection of the data that these chapters presented took place in a total of five different field sites in two different parts of Turkey: Western and Southeast (Chapter 2).

The first part of Chapter 5 discussed the different forms 'Kurdishness' might take amongst individuals and focused on the role that regions play on these different forms. It was shown that 'Kurdishness' is exhibited by individuals through cultural attachment, through identification or through both. With regards to cultural attachment, individuals again show variances: some individuals take language and culture together, whereas others express an attachment towards Kurdish language

without necessarily expressing belonging to any elements of Kurdish culture. 'Kurdishness' is also manifested amongst individuals in the form of identifying one's self as Kurd, which, again, develops independently of other forms of 'Kurdishness'. Contrary to the essentialist camp within the literature (Fishman 1975), language is not considered the "heart of a people" (Herder quoted in Fishman 1975: 1). Instead of imagining the world as made up of different ethnic groups, "each held together by a unique cultural worldview, a shared identity, and bonds of solidarity", the findings suggest an approach that is more in line with boundary making theories that argue for "a more dynamic and differentiated" approach (Wimmer 2013: 204). The findings show that it is possible for a non-Kurdish speaker to identify himself or herself as a Kurd. Even though non-Kurdish speakers are referred to as 'half-Kurds' by native speakers in some occasions, this does not change the way non-Kurdish speakers identify themselves. This suggests the role of the agency in construction of 'Kurdishness'. It is through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969), instead of any other external deterministic forces, that the respondents shape the boundaries of their own forms of 'Kurdishness'. The role that being located in different regions plays in constructing these different forms of 'Kurdishness' is observed with regards to cultural attachments: all the respondents from Southeast Turkey expressed their attachment towards cultural elements, whereas for the respondents from Western part of Turkey, this was less clear.

The second part of Chapter 5 discussed acts of prejudice and discrimination as one of the means of boundary making. The data showed the acts of prejudice and discrimination the respondents receive in their everyday lives, in line with Wimmer's concept of "informal, everyday discrimination" (2013: 75). It was possible to observe everyday acts of prejudice and discrimination in all of the five field sites. However, the role of different regions could again be observed within the nature of these everyday acts: in Southeast Turkey, everyday acts of prejudice and discrimination is more likely to be encountered due to linguistic reasons. That is, acts of prejudice and discrimination that individuals from Southeast Turkey encounter happen either because they do not speak Turkish in public space or because of the accent in which they speak Turkish. In the Western part of Turkey; however, these linguistic differences are less obvious and therefore, acts of prejudice and discrimination are

encountered due to their ethnic origins. Boundary markers, then, vary across regions: in the Western part of Turkey, ethnic origins acts as a boundary marker, whereas in the Southeast, language and the accent are boundary markers for 'Kurdishness'.

Chapter 6 continued this discussion on how everyday practices amongst 'ordinary people' play a role on the construction of forms of 'Kurdishness'. This chapter focused on the role that the language plays on shaping different forms of 'Kurdishness'. For this purpose, it introduced two other factors that play a significant role on the formation of different forms of 'Kurdishness': family environment and neighbourhood/social status. The influence of these two factors is explained through the question of language, which is another question that this research is interested in. Family environments and neighbourhoods in which the respondents live shape their language acquisition, which, in turn, play a significant role for receiving acts of prejudice and discrimination. One of the ways through which the family environment could influence how 'Kurdishness' is manifested by the respondents is through the language that they acquire in their family environment and the accent they acquire with it. The language that the respondents learn within their families shapes their interaction in their outside environment. Ebru's case, for instance, showed that her not knowing Turkish during her pre-school years contributed to her not playing outside with the other children in Derik. The fact that some other children in Derik had Turkish as their mother tongue and her having Kurdish as the mother tongue suggested the importance of the family environment in the manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. The accent the respondents have while speaking Turkish is also influential in shaping their social interactions in their outside environment. Speaking Kurdish in public spaces and/or speaking Turkish with an accent that non-native speakers have result in encountering discrimination and prejudice, hence shaping the forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested by individuals. Through these interactions, Chapters 5 and 6 present the factors that together constitute 'everyday practices' on the different forms of 'Kurdishness'. The last part of Chapter 6 discussed the (re-) shaping of boundaries of 'Kurdishness' through the narratives of the respondents. By using the pronouns 'we' [*biz*] and 'they' [*onlar*], the respondents decide who the members are of this ethnic category of 'Kurdishness'. The criteria of this membership could be based on where individuals are located in Turkey or on

whether an individual is a native speaker of Kurdish. In line with the boundary making approach; however, there are also occasions where membership to this ethnic category are determined through "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) even if an individual is a non-native speaker of Kurdish or is located outside of Southeast Turkey.

By putting the emphasis on everyday experiences of the respondents, Chapters 5 and 6 show the importance of 'everyday practices' in the manifestation of different forms of 'Kurdishness'. Based on these everyday experiences, some form of 'Kurdishness' or other is being constructed and re-constructed on a daily basis by the respondents. These two chapters contribute to the overarching argument of the thesis by showing various forms of 'Kurdishness' and by showing that the unique everyday experiences that the respondents perceive result in customised forms of 'Kurdishness'.

- **State Rhetoric and 'Kurdishness'**

Chapters 3 and 4 explored the question of the role that the state rhetoric plays on manifesting different forms of 'Kurdishness'. For this purpose, they discussed two different 'moments of transition' in Turkish Republic and looked at the state rhetorics during those 'moments of transition'. Then, the forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested in those two periods were discussed. Chapter 3 focused on the early Republican period (1923-1938) and discussed the state rhetoric that was adopted by the Kemalist elites during this period. By analysing selected statements from the elites, laws, and regulations, it showed that the state rhetoric during the Kemalist period emphasised secularism, centralisation, and modernisation/Westernisation. The policies that were adopted during this period also established the importance of the Turkish language for the nation-building. By focusing on two of the most important manifestations of 'Kurdishness' during this period, the second part of this chapter discussed that, as a reaction to this rhetoric, the form of the 'Kurdishness' manifested consisted of religious, tribal, and ethnic elements. Chapter 4 continued this discussion by looking at the second 'moment of transition': the AKP period that started in 2002. The first part of this chapter, again through the use of documents, discussed the main characteristics of the rhetoric that has been used by the AKP. In a

way, this discussion explained why the AKP period was considered as another 'moment of transition': the rhetoric that has been used by the AKP, the "counterelites with a new Islamic discourse on ethnicity and nationality" (Aktürk 2012), is contrasted to the Kemalist rhetoric that emphasised secularism. The decrease in the importance of secularism and the increasing emphasis on Islam has allowed space for expression of other ethnicities, which has contributed to the shaping of 'Kurdishness' in a form that emphasises other factors. The discussion of the AKP rhetoric, however, also showed significant continuities with the Kemalist rhetoric. The emphasis put on Turkish language and on centralisation has remained significantly the same.

The second part of this chapter, through the fieldwork data, focused on different forms of 'Kurdishness' manifested by individuals. The data showed that two themes have been dominant when the respondents expressed their demands: the right to have education in mother tongue [*anadilde eğitim*] and the right to self-determination. In comparison to the early Republican period, 'Kurdishness' under the AKP period has been transformed to focus more on linguistic and on self-determination demands, in accordance with the transformed state rhetoric. At the end, the discussions in Chapters 3 and Chapter 4 showed that not only the changes but also the continuities within the state rhetorics during these two 'moments of transition' shape the forms of 'Kurdishness' that are manifested in their respective periods. This discussion reinforces the overall argument of the thesis that suggests different forms of 'Kurdishness'.

This two-dimensional approach towards 'Kurdishness' also serves to reinforce the dynamic nature of the ethnicity construction. The different forms of 'Kurdishness' emerge as the result of the interaction of these different elements discussed in this thesis (regions, language, and state rhetoric) and these are unique to each individual. This thesis showed the different forms of 'Kurdishness' by illustrating them through fieldwork data and through document research. It is beyond the intentions of this thesis to claim that these three factors outlined in this thesis are the only means through which the different forms of 'Kurdishness' are exhibited. What this thesis suggests; however, is to take the concept of 'Kurdishness' as something more than a mere identity; it is a "contextually fluctuating conceptual variable" (Brubaker 2002:

167-168) that is in a constant state of transformation as a result of its interaction with the three factors outlined in the previous chapters. In the following section, I focus on the contributions of this research in theoretical, empirical, and in methodological aspects.

Thinking Beyond This Research

This research's contribution to the existing sociological research could be considered three-fold: firstly, it presents original empirical data on manifestations of 'Kurdishness' and discusses the different factors that are effective on different manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. Secondly, this research presents the theoretical discussion on 'Kurdishness' as something that is in a constant state of transformation; as something that is *customised* for each individual; as a construction the boundaries to which are (re-)shaped due to contextual variability. This research also offers methodological insights into studying ethnicity through the combination of different research methods.

- Empirical Contributions

The empirical aspect of this research's contribution comes not least from the originality of the data and from the diversity of regions where the data were collected. The empirical contribution of this research lies in the fact that the data were collected in five different field sites in two different parts of Turkey: Western and Southeast. As discussed in Chapter 2, all these five different field sites have their unique characteristics. This way, this research explored the question of the role different regions play on manifestations of 'Kurdishness'. Contrary to the previous studies that showed Kurds living in the Southeast region of Turkey showing more support for ethno-nationalism (Sarigil and Fazlioglu 2014), this research showed that individuals living in Western Turkey also exhibit forms of 'Kurdishness' albeit in different ways. The diversity of individual experiences regarding 'Kurdishness' is

understood by looking at different parts of Turkey that have their unique characteristics.

This research also introduces the concept of 'half-Kurd'. As discussed in Chapter 5, this concept was coined by native speakers of Kurdish for non-native speakers. This illustrated the importance of Barth's concept of "ascription" (1969). However, the importance of "self-ascription" (Barth 1969) was also illustrated through Emel, one of the people who was referred to as 'half-Kurd' by native speakers. Despite what others ascribed to her, she insists on defining herself as a Kurd. This concept helps reinforcing the idea that there are varieties of 'Kurdishness': different, customised meanings of 'Kurdishness' for different individuals. In line with the boundary-making framework of this thesis, this concept illustrates the different boundaries individuals construct through their personal experiences.

- **Theoretical Contributions of This Research**

The main arguments that were outlined in this research contribute to the theoretical discussion in several ways. Firstly, this research contributes to the understanding of ethnicity construction. Taking ethnicity construction as something that is neither being imposed by the state nor by the 'others', this research takes individuals themselves as the agents of the construction. Individuals construct forms of 'Kurdishness' "on the ground" (Fearon and Laitin 2000: 855). Even though individuals as the agents of construction has been discussed widely in the literature (Chapter 1), this research contributes to the discussion by pointing out to different elements that influence individuals on their construction of different forms of 'Kurdishness': state rhetoric, encounters of prejudice and discrimination, family environments, and neighbourhoods. In this discussion, this thesis begins with macro forces on ethnicity construction (state rhetoric) in Chapters 3 and 4, and continues with more micro elements in each of the following chapters: regions (Chapter 5) and language (Chapter 6).

Secondly, by looking at these different factors, this thesis argues that one single factor cannot sufficiently explain the existence of varieties of 'Kurdishness'. These

factors, in a way, complement each other. For instance, two individuals might live in the same region within Turkey, yet the forms of 'Kurdishness' they construct differ due to their different family environments and neighbourhoods. Or, the role that state rhetoric plays was discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Similar to Cohen's concept of "personal nationalism" (1996), however, individuals make their own meanings of state rhetoric. This argument also suggests that 'Kurdishness' is constructed through (re-)negotiating the two different factors on a daily basis: state rhetoric and everyday practices. Similar to Ernest Renan's famous description of a nation as a "daily plebiscite" (Renan 1990), 'Kurdishness' is (re-)constructed on a daily basis through the interaction of state rhetoric and everyday practices. This way, this thesis suggests that 'Kurdishness' is customised.

Thirdly, in line with the boundary-making approach that this research adopts, this thesis shows different boundary markers for 'Kurdishness' in different parts of Turkey. As discussed in Chapter 5, language and the accent could act as boundary markers for individuals from Southeast Turkey, whereas for individuals for Western Turkey, they would not necessarily act as markers. For the respondents in Western Turkey, ethnic origins are shown to be more significant as boundary markers. By pointing out to different boundary markers in different contexts, this research contributes to the understanding of boundary (re-)making of ethnicities.

- **Methodological Contributions to the Study of Ethnicity**

The methodological contribution of this research is linked to the theoretical framework of this research. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) argue that nation is also "embedded in the routine practices of everyday life" (2008: 553) in addition to studying the structural forces of nation construction, so studying it requires different methods such as surveys, interviewing, and participant observation.[167] Nation, according to Fox and Miller-Idriss, is the product of *both* structural forces *and* "the

[167] It should be noted here that Fox and Miller-Idriss' discussion revolves around the concept of 'nation' and 'nationhood', whereas throughout this thesis the term 'ethnicity' has been used. In Chapter 1, I explained that with regards to 'Kurdishness' in Turkey, whether it is a 'nation' and 'ethnicity' is not really significant as it is a concept, I argue, that is independent of the aspirations for nation-state. That is why I find that the discussion of 'everyday nationalism' and "everyday ethnicity" (Brubaker, et al., 2006) are related for the purposes of this research.

practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in routine activities" (2008: 537). To explore the two-dimensional approach towards ethnicity that this research adopts, this thesis made use of three different methods: interviews, participant observation, and document research. To explore how 'Kurdishness' is manifested through "ordinary people engaging in routine activities", this thesis made use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Documents were researched to explore the role that state rhetoric plays on 'Kurdishness'.

The effectiveness of the "triangulation of methods" (Denzin 1978) for research on ethnicity could be explained by understanding what each method aimed at exploring. Semi-structured interviews in this research were conducted to gather life stories of different individuals. Participant observation is useful in capturing the more mundane activities such as conversations in the tearooms, responses to the everyday news, and social interactions of individuals. Compared to the interviewing method in which the context is 'forced' by the interviewer, participant observation is more about "wait-and-listen approach because most of everyday life is devoid of national inflection" (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008: 556). Participant observation and interviews together are effective in exploring the 'bottom-up' approaches towards ethnicity, whereas document research is useful to to explore the state-led forces on ethnicity.

Directions for Future Research

This research explored how 'Kurdishness' is manifested within Turkey. For this reason, its focus was on the different forms of 'Kurdishness' individuals construct. It is essential to remember; however, that 'Kurdishness' is not the only ethnicity that exists within the borders of the Turkish state. As one of the arguments of this thesis is that everyday practices have an influence on shaping different forms of 'Kurdishness', these everyday practices should be understood in more detail: who are the groups that individuals who construct forms of 'Kurdishness' interact on a daily basis? If there are many different ethnic groups within the Turkish state, then how do interactions amongst those different ethnic groups contribute to our understanding on ethnicities? Saracoglu's (2009) study contributes to this discussion by showing the

importance of individual experiences and of interactions in everyday life of Turkish cities[168] in the formation of an 'exclusive recognition' that specifically targets Kurds. His data shows that based on everyday contacts with the Kurdish migrants in Western cities, an antagonistic attitude that specifically recognizes and targets Kurds is being constructed by individuals independent of the state discourse and according to this individualistic discourse, Kurds are seen as an 'experienced Other' (2009: 642). Drawing on this idea, one follow-up study could be conducted to explore how 'Kurdishness' and 'Turkishness' are influenced by their mutual interaction.

Another route to further research is through the field of Diaspora studies. This research explored the role that different regions play on manifestation of 'Kurdishness' and for this reason, it collected data from two different parts of Turkey. If "diasporas form when populations disperse from their homeland to foreign lands" (Soysal 2000: 2-3), then is it possible to consider Kurds living in Western part of Turkey as "internal diasporas" (O'Connor 2015)? This research showed that different regions generate different contexts for individuals. To extend this question, how does living in different nation-states play a role for shaping the boundaries of diasporic communities? Is there a difference in the ways through which 'Kurdishness' is formed across the borders of different nation-states? How do individuals, living in different nation-states, imagine themselves as members of the same "imagined community" (Anderson 1983)? Or, to rephrase it by referring to the boundary-making approach, how do individuals see themselves as members of the same ethnic category (shaping the boundaries of 'Kurdishness') across the borders of different nation-states? In the case of second-generation immigrants who are "increasingly part of the global" and "in many ways, bypassing the national or traditional" (Soysal 2000: 11), how do they shape the boundaries of their ethnic category? These are some of the questions that could help in further understanding ethnicity and in further connecting studies on ethnicity to Diaspora studies.

Concluding Remarks

[168] Saracoglu conducted his field study in the Western city of Izmir.

When I started this research, the main questions of interest were to explore the roles that state rhetoric, regions, and the language play on manifestation of 'Kurdishness'. The main aim of this research was to understand the diversity of experiences on 'Kurdishness'. The data collected through interviews in five different field sites, through participant observation, and through document research show the different, personalised, and customised forms of 'Kurdishness' that are constructed by individuals. As a concluding sentence, then, the individuality of 'Kurdishness' should be emphasised. This thesis showed, in line with the boundary making approach, that what 'Kurdishness' means, its boundaries, and how it is experienced shows variances depending on the changes and the continuities within state rhetoric, on different regions, and on the language use. Through the interaction of these different elements, 'Kurdishness' is (re-)negotiated by individuals who make meanings of their own, customised forms of 'Kurdishness'.

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Appendices:

Table 1: List of Respondents

No	*Name*	*Town*	*Occupation*
1	Mahsun	Istanbul	Journalist
2	Halil	Istanbul	Journalist
3	Muhammed	Istanbul	Journalist
4	Emel	Ayvalık	Teacher
5	Ibrahim	Ayvalık	Construction worker
6	Rezine	Ayvalık	Teacher
7	Reyhan	Ayvalık	Teacher
8	Arzu	Ayvalık	Teacher
9	Arif	Ayvalık	Construction worker
10	Emir	Ayvalık	Teacher
11	Osman	Ayvalık	Construction worker
12	Kadir	Mardin	Professor
13	Ahmet	Mardin	Student
14	Mehmet	Mardin	Student
15	Hasan	Mardin	Teacher
16	Umut	Mardin	Teacher
17	İlhan	Diyarbakır	Teacher
18	Ayşe	Diyarbakır	Public sector
19	Ümit	Diyarbakır	Public sector
20	Süleyman	Diyarbakır	Teacher
21	Ebru	Derik	Student
22	Meryem	Derik	Student
23	Abdurrahman	Derik	Business owner
24	Dilan	Derik	Teacher
25	Ali	Derik	Teacher
26	Murat	Derik	Teacher
27	Abdullah	Derik	Teacher
28	Ramazan	Derik	Construction worker
29	Elif	Derik	NGO worker
30	Baran	Derik	Student
31	Selahattin	Derik	Teacher
32	Burak	Ayvalık	Student
33	Rıza	Derik	Teacher

Map 1: Location of the Field Sites

- Istanbul
- Ayvalık
- Diyarbakır
- Derik
- Mardin